

FIVE
GODLY, AND PRO-
fitable Sermons concerning

- 1 The slaverie of sinne.
- 2 The mischief of ignorance.
- 3 The roote of Apostasie.
- 4 The benefit of Gods service.
- 5 The Christians loue.

Preached in his life time in sundry places.

By that late faithfull Minister of
Christ Mr WILLIAM
PEMBLE of Mag-
dalen Hall in the Vni-
versity of Oxford.

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TO THE READER.

CHRISTIAN Reader: These Sermons were by the godly, and learned Author of them fitted for the congregations to which he was to speake, &c) no doubt intended onely for the benefit of hearers, not of readers. Neverthelessse it was the desire of many that they might bee published upon hope of good that might be done to the Church of God by them. There is neede of plaine instructions to incite men to holynes of life, as well as accurate treatises to discerne trueth from error. For which end I dare promise these Sermons will make much, wherethey finde an honest, and humble reader. It was the Authors greatest care to handle the word of God by manifestation of the truth commending himselfe to every mans conscience in the sight of God; as once S. Paul pleaded for himselfe. 2. Cor. 4. 2. And if that be the property (which they say) of an eloquent, and

Gell. noct.
Antic. lib. 1.
cap. 15.

good speaker non ex ore, sed ex pectore, to
speak frō his hart rather thā his tongue, then sure-
ly this Author was an excellent orator, one that
spake out of sound vnderstanding with true affec-
tiō. Many excellencies there were in him for which
his memory remaines : but this aboue all was his
crowne that he vnfainedly sought Gods glory, and
the good of mens soules. It remaines, that these
sermons be read by thee with a care to profit, and
thanksgiving to God for the benefit thou hast by
them, sith they are such talents, as in the vse of
which hee requires, and expects to bee glorified:
Farewell.

Thine in the Lord Iesus

IOHN TOMBES.



IOH. 8. 34.

*Iesus answered them: verily, verily I say vnto you, that
whoſoeuer committeth sinne is the ſervant of sinne.*



O acquaint you briefly
with the occasion of these
words: their coherence
with the foregoing and
following verses standes
thus. Vpon some confe-
rence and arguments be-
tween our Saviour Christ
and the Pharisees with o-
ther of the Iewes about
the qualitie of his person,
who and what manner of
man he should be; Christ

having plainly testified who he was, even the light of the
world, that Messiah whom they had so long expected: it so
comes to passe, that many of the people that were present
hearing Christ defend his authoritie against the cavils of the
Pharisees, were thereby moved to beleeve in him, ver. 39. Vnto

these

these believers Christ directs his speech, telling them that it was not enough for the present to seeme forward in embracing & yeelding assent vnto his doctrine. There is more in it then so, if they will proue themselves to be true beleivers and his Disciples they must persevere in the profession and practise of his Doctrine (*if yee Continue in my word ye are verily my Disciples*) *vers. 31.* Now whereas many things might discourage these young beginners from going on further, especially their ignorance of this heavenly Doctrine, and with all those manifold sinfull Corruptions from which they could not quickly shift themselves, Christ for their encouragement adds by way of promise, that if they will hold on they both (*shall know the truth*) *vz:* The Gospell and all the wayes of Gods grace in mans redemption by Christ, and further (*the truth shall make them free*) *vers. 32.* from the bondage of such inconveniences as might keepe them backe from the resolute profession of the Gospell, as feare of the displeasure of the Pharises and rulers, feare of losse, disgrace and reproach in the world, loue of those sinnes and pleasures wherein they liued heretofore and which now they might be vnwilling to leaue. Those encumbrances, which caused many a one to withdraw himselfe from following of Christ, our Saviour promisseth these beleivers, that if they will be Constant they shall haue no power nor Commande over them: But that the grace of God in the cleere knowledge of the Gospell should make them Freemen and set them at liberty from the feare or loue of all such things, as might pull them aside from an holy profession of the name of Christ *vers. 32.* This louing admonition of Christ is very ill taken by the Iewes. Christ had touched vpon that string that jarred, and they might not endure to be thus closely though iustly taxed for hypocrites and Counterfeites, such as were so farre from being true beleiuing Disciples vnto him, as that they still continued in bondage vnto their Corruption and would be ready vpon every

every occasion to flie of from Christs service. Wherefore when Christ tells them that the truth should make them freemen, out of a perverse mistake they turne this clause into occasion of quarrell and take great exceptions at Christ for calling them slaves and bondmen (*wee be say they, in great stomack, Abrahams seed and were never in bondage to any man; Why sayest thou then yee shall be made free vers. 33.*) Those Commonly bragge most that may doe least, and yee haue few that stande more stiffe vpon termes of reputation, then those that haue least true worth in them selues. So it is with these worthlesse Iewes, who stand punctually vpon points of honour to cleare themselves from that imputation of bodily slauery, which Christ layd on them (as they thought) when yet in the meane time they are of all slaues the basest, *vz.* servants of sinne and Corruption. They said something that was true that *they were Abrahams Children* borne of Sarah the Freewoman, and this Christ denied not. But whereas they had said, *they were never in bondage to any man* that was false euen in regarde of their Corporall bondage. For their bondage in Egypt of old, their Captivity for 70. yeeres in Assiria of latter times, and the present subiection of their whole state vnder the yoke of the Roman gouernement was witness sufficient that it was no such strange matter for a Iew to be a bondman. But say they had beene alwayes free from such bodily slauery, this was not that which Christ aimed at in that speech of his (*the truth shall make you free*) twas spirituall leuitude vnder the power of sinne which he meant, and seeing they will not otherwise vnderstand him hee declares himselfe in plaine tearmes in this 34. verse, *verily verily I say unto you who soeuer Committeth sinne is the servant of sinne*) There are servants of sinne as well as servants of men, and the Conditions of those is as bad as of these yea worse. Christ makes the Comparifon in two paticulars.

1. Servants must haue no inheritaunce with the free borne Children

Children they may for a while enioy the common benefit of the familie : but at last they must be turned out and the children only diuide the inheritance: so wicked men for a while liue together in Gods house the Church : but when the rewarde of inheritance shalbee bestowed on the children of God these are vtterly throwne out of all, and no part falls to their share. This is expressed, ver. 35. [*And the servant abideth not in the house for ever but the sonne abideth for ever.*]

2 Servants must haue their freedome from a free man that hath power to set them at libertie. So must sinners from Christ the only sonne of God, who hath this power and authority given vnto him of bondslaues to Sathan and sinne to make them Gods freemen. He alone brings deliverance to captiues and prisoners, translating miserable sinners, from vnder the commande of the power of darknesse into the liberty of Gods adopted sonnes; who being himselfe made heire of all things as Gods naturall sonne admits vs the adopted sonnes into the fellowship of a glorious inheritance. This is set downe, ver. 36. [*If the sonne therefore shall make you free yee shalbe free indeede.*] Thus the servants of sinne are in an ill case sure to be turned out of house and home, except the sonne of God Iesus Christ shall purchase their freedome and bestow an inheritance vpon them. But what? were these Iewes here such kinde of bondmen? Yea that they were: and Christ makes it good in the two verses following by vndeniable arguments. Their vngodly practise shewed plainly what master they serued, and by whose commande they were ruled, [*I know, saith Christ, yee are Abrahams seed*] viz. according to the flesh, and so borne of free parents: but yet yee are not freemen so long as malice, contempt of the gospell, loue of the world, bloody desires of an innocent mans death with such like corruptions, tyrannize and beare rule over your hearts as they doe. For why? [*but yee seeke to kill me.*] A cruell master it must be that will commande, and very slaues they are that will be obedient to

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to do so ill an office as to murder Christ. But the reason followes ye doe it (*because my words haue no place in you.*) That most holy, pure, meeke and peaceable Doctrine of the Gospell, which Christ published vnto them could haue no command over their heartes to win them to subiectiō & obedience therevnto: they were engaged to another master & to his word they would obey, not Christs, not Gods, *ve.* 37. which in the next *vers.* 38. appeares yet more plainly.) Haith Christ *speake vnto you that which I haue seene with my Father: and ye doe that which you haue seene with your Father* (1) I speake vnto you the will of God and you obey the will of the Diuel. Whence it is easie to judge vnto whom ye belong, and whether yee be the Children of God free subjects vnder his gracious government, or the children of the Diuel and slavish vassalls vnder his mercilesse tyrainie. You see now the occasion and Coherence of these wordes I haue read vnto you. The scope wherof in breefe is this: To giue these Iewes right information of their present condition what it was. They in great errorr boasted themselues much vpon their outward liberty while yet they were the seruaunts of vnrighteousnes. Wherefor our Saviour for their instruction and ours lets them vnderstand that they bee slaues that serue sinne as well as those that serue men: And for this purpose he pronounceth to them and vs this most certaine and vdeniable truth (*Verily verily I say vnto you whosoever Committeth sinne is the servant of sinne.* The meaning of the wordes is plaine if you obserue.

1 What it is to Commit sinne 2 what to be a servant of sinne. To commit sinne is not simply to doe any act contrary to the law and will of God: for even the regenerate and most sanctified men in many thingss sin often, who nevertheless are not the seruaunts of sinne but are free from sinne and made the seruaunts of God as it is *Rom. 6. 22.* In this place therefore to commit sinne [*miti tñ aqua gñar*] is to do euill willingly and ordinarily: When men make as it were a trade and common practise of breaking the lawe of God
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holding on in an vnusuall course of vngodly liuing without remorse & reformatiō, of such Christ tels vs that they be the seruants or slaues [slaves] of sinne (i) they liue in subiection to the power of their sinnfull Corruption, as slaues doe to the Command of their masters. Sinne rules over them as masters doe over their seruants. The maine point of Doctrine then that these words doe afford is this.

Doct.

A sinner is a bondslane, & to liue in sinne is to liue in thraldome. For the more distinct explication of this point touching mans spirituall bondage vnder sinne I desire you to obserue three particulars,

- 1 *The nature of this bondage wherein it consistes.*
- 2 *The diuerse degrees and kindes of it.*
- 3 *The greatnes and grieuousnes of it.*

For the first: the bondage of sinne standeth Chiefly in two things 1 *In subiection to the power of sinne.*

- 2 *In subiection to the punishment of sinne.*

The power and authority that sinne hath over man is seene in two particulars.

- 1 *In restraining his liberty from doing of good.*
- 2 *In Commanding his service in all bad employments.*

As a master over his seruants canne both bid and forbid them: So the sinne that rules in mens mortall bodies hath power both to restraine them from good and to employ them in euill practises: you shall see both true in their order.

1 *Sinne hath power of restraint and hindring from the doing of good.* A slaue is not in his owne power but his masters, hee cannot goe whither he will nor doe what he lists nor dispose of himselfe as he pleaseth, his service, his goods, his life are all ordered by his masters discretion. So is it with a sinner who is holden in the setters and chaines of his corruption, he is not his owne man nor can he doe what many times he would. In men that are regenerate and sanctified in part experience yet witnesseth how much they are pestered and cumbred with this sinne that hangeth on so fast

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fast about them. How ever the spirit be willing and faine they would doe much in the service of God; yet the flesh is weake and they are so shackled with it, that for their liues they can make but slow hast in the wayes of godlines, much a doe they haue to keepe jogging on, dulnesse, distraction, hypocrisie, formality and a world of other corruptions set vpon them in every spirituall duty, in every good resolution; so that when they do best, their work is yet done but to halues. Grace is yoked with Corruption, when that puts vs forward, this puls vs backward, in so much that a regenerate man is but halfe a freeman, being alwayes in some sort molested by his Corruption in the whole course of his religious Conversation, according as the Apostle Paul in the person of euery regenerate man complaines very pittifully. *Rom. 7. 19. 20. 21.* But now in those that are vnregenerate this power of sin is much more predominant, whole hearts, affections, vnderstandings, and all in them are fast locked and barred vp vnder impenitencie, rebellion and blindnesse, so that they are *holden prisoners of Satan at his pleasure*, as the Apostle speaketh, *2. Tim. 2. 26.* Sinne hath dealt with those men as wee doe with wilde fowle, clipping their wings that they may not fly away; or as enemies doe with captiues disarmie them of their weapons that they shall bee able to make no shift for their rescue. So hath sin vtterly disabled man to every good worke by putring out the eies of his knowledge, and stripping him naked of all those graces & strength which he had by creation. Beside this sinne hath taken away all desire of doing good, haueing affected the soule of man with the loue of all vnrighteousnes, whereby it comes to passe that man is well contented to be the servant of sinne taking great delight in his owne shame and misery: Vnregenerate men are kept fast in durance, being neither able nor willing to come out of their bondage. In this respect is sinne compared to snares, and netts, and bonds wherein men are caught, and kept

kept fast for escaping, [*I finde* saith *Solomon, Eccles. 7. 28.*] *more bitter then death, the woman whose heart is as nettles and snares, & her hands as bonds.* Thereby signifying the most intangling and inthralling nature of the sinne of adultery, whereinto few men fall that euer get out againe [*I see that thou art in the gall of bitternesse, and in the bond of iniquity*] saith *Peter to Simon Magus Acts. 8. 23.* Why because for all his seeming profession, he was still tyed to his couetousnes & other vile affections, like a slaue bound to a post with a chaine. So *Paul* exhorts *Timothy* that he instruct his hearers to the end they might [*Come to amendment and recover out of the snare of the Diuell, of whome they were taken prisoners at his will. 2. Tim. 2. 26.*] And for this cause are sinners in the state of vnregeneration, compared to captiues and prisoners kept vp in restraint, *Isaiah. 61. 1. Isai. 42. 7:*

But here you are to note that Satan and sinne doe not deale alike rigorously with all: they carry a straighter hand ouer some then ouer others. Some they keep in *arcta custodia* in close imprisonment. And that is when men by Satan and corruption are made so sure and so fast chained, that they cannot goe one step beyond prophaneesse and impiery. Thus is it with men, that are kept close prisoners in the darke dungeon of ignorance, or who stick fast in the dirt or mire of beastly, covetous, and voluptuous affections: in a word those that are giuen over to all vngodly and lewd courses. Others there are who are indeed prisoners, but yet they are kept in *libera custodia* in a larger kind of restraint, or as we say, in free prison. And this is when Satan sporting himselfe in the sinne and misery of man holds him in a longer chaine, and lets him goe a good way onward in Christianity; but yet at last fetcheth him back againe when he pleaseth like birds in a larger Cage they flutter about, or like birds in a string they make a faire flight vp towards heauen; but Satan when he spies his advantage, that by their fall he may giue some notable foyle to Gods glory, and the credit of his

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Gospell, then he twitcheth the string and downe they tumble vnto hell. Such are those of which *Peter* speaks 2. *Peter* 2. 18. 19. 20. *who had escaped farre from the filthinesse of the world, but yet were intangled againe therein.* Such a one was *Demas* whose coveteousnesse hookt him back from his profession of the Gospell to the world. And such was the young man in the Gospell, who was come neere to the kingdome of heauen, but he had one legge chained fast to the loue of riches, and that sett him quite back againe. All these haue a kind of liberty, but t'is only of the prison: They walke abroad but t'is in fetters, or as prisoners in *Rome* vsed to be dealt with, chained to a souldier their keeper that doth accompany them to see them safe returned to their jayle. Now you knowe that a slaue who walkes abroad to do his masters businesse, is yet a slaue as well as he that is chained in the Gallie. And so are these still servants and bondmen to their corruptions, how ever they seeme for the present to bee more favorable vsed. Thus of the first point wherein the masterlie power of sinne stands, viz: the restraint from doing the good we should, and sometimes would. Now in the next place, Sinne hath also

2. *A power of commanding all bad seruices, without fuer:* A slaue you knowe must ride and runne, drudge and drudge, carry and draw, hew in quarries, digg in the mines, tugge at the oare, labour like horses in a mill, and be put to all the base offices that are to be done. Honourable seruices, there be that a freeman, a sonne may bee, employed in: but servants and slaues indure the basest and painfulllest drudgeries. So is it with a sinner; he is at the command of his sinne, as the Asses of his driuer, or as the Centurions servants were at their masters becke. Looke how Satan inspires him and his corruption suggests vnto him, so he studies and plotts, so he invents and practises. Be it but one sinne that raignes over him, you shall see him euer attendant on that master, as bee it lust, pleasures, coveteousnesse, ambition, he is wholly taken vp in their

their employments. He hath nothing to spare from them: no thoughts, no words, no time: weeke day and Sabbath day, their businesse still goes on ; nay the day is not enough for the doing of its command . He deviseth mischief vpon his bedd, and he cannot sleepe till he haue lay'd a plott how hee may compasse one of his vngodly desires . He will be profound, crafty, and diligent in contriving and dispatching the affaires , which the Diuell and his corrupt heart haue giuen him in command . For this cause is sinne compared vnto a law, *Rom. 7. 23.* because it commands and rules ouer men by powerful suggestions, provoking them to euill. A lawlesse law it is, but fitt for lawlesse men, it prohibitere all that good is, and enioynes the practise of every euill thing. And hence also is Satan stiled the prince of this world, because he hath noe meane company at his devotion ouer whome hee rules as vassals and slaues, most ready to obey his will and pleasure. But will you see what employment sinne and Satan set men about. Are they honorable services? no: the most vile, base, absurd, and vnreasonable offices that can be devised, what will not they command , or what will not one of their servants do against religion, conscience, justice, common honesty, yea and nature it selfe? Let coveteousnes tyrannize ouer him: how basely, riggardly, scraping, pinching and sparing will he be? How most vnconscionably and vnmercifully will he oppresse, exact, cozen and deceiue all the world, strangers, acquaintance, rich, poore, friends or foes, Brother, Father and all that may challenge faire and honest dealing? If iust rule him he will damne his soule, destroy his body, disgrace his name, overthrow his estate, vndoe all his posterity for the loue of some base whore. The like may be said of Pride, Gluttony and Voluptuousnes or any such like swaggering lust. Yea to goe farther, the godly many times are here besotted, who to satisie some one vnmasterly desire, will hazard the peace and comfort of their soules, disgrace themselves and their profession , vex the spirit and

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and cast themselves vpon Gods sore displeasure. So violent and tyrannicall are these commands of sinne and Satan, and so base and servile are we growne in our obedience to them, that we will not stick to do that which in the practise or event of it tends to our owne vtter vndoing. Now who would not be ashamed of such a master, and such a service? Nay who is not ashamed of it? But here is the power of darknesse and the invisible tyrannie of Satan, that whom wee hate yet we feare, and serue: of whom we are ashamed, to him yet we shew our selues obedient. Thus much touching a sinners subiection vnto the power of sinne.

Next follows *his subiection vnto the punishment of it*, which is the sorest part of this bondage which yet a sinner must surely beare. He is in this respect of all slaues the most miserable: for let him looke which way he will he can see nothing but scourges and Scorpions provided for his backe; the whip, the Crosse, the forke and such like punishments of slaues in old time are nothing to the torments he stands in feare of. No sober houre passeth over a sinners head wherein his heart is not full of slavish and dreadfull terrors, arising from a threefold cause.

1 *From Conscience*, the horrible clamors whereof terrifie his very soule and gripe him to the heart with vn-sufferable panges, while it stil cries in his eare in this ruefull voice [*yet know that for this God shall bring thee to Iudgment*] oh this makes him quake and grow pale he is afraide to looke God or men in the face, he shifts & faine would if he could hide his finnes from the knowledge of his Conscience, and both from Gods eie.

2 *From Satan*, who though he now seeme as his Master yet he knowes and trembles to thinke of it that hereafter he must be his everlasting tormentor.

3 *From God himselfe*, whose most furious wrath and vna-voidable vengeance he knows is prepared for him and ready every moment to swallow him for his rebellion. Now
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who coulde eate his meate merrily that must pay such a shot? What comforts of this life, what pleasures of sin can be sweete which are every moment imbittered with so many woes? It helpes not a iot that they be for a time deferred: for he is no freeman who though he be not clapt vp in prison, yet cannot walke abroad without feare of the Sergeant, the prison, the gallowes, when the country is laide for him, and executions out for him in every place. Certainly it is a hell to liue in feare of hell, and as bad as death to liue in bondage for feare thereof all the daies of a mans life. Heb. 2. 13.

Yet such is the miserable thraldome of a wicked man, he is euerie way in the bryers, being on the one side fast chained to his sinnefull and vngodlie courses; on the other as surely and certaine lie bound to his everlasting punishment. And so much for the first part of the nature of this, spirituall bondage wherein it standeth.

2 I goe forward to the next point which I proposed to your consideration, viz. *The diverse degrees of this bondage*: where you are to note that there are two kindes of it. 1. wilfull. 2. vnwilfull slavery.

1 *Wilfull bondage*, is when a free mā is content to be made a slaue, or being by force or fraud made one, is willing to continue one still. Such a one was *Ahab* who sold himselfe for a slaue to doe wickedly. 1. King. 21. 20. I will giue the worth of it, said he to *Naboth* when he sought after his vine yard; true, he gaue the full worth of it, that sold himselfe for a few acres of land. Such are all those that commit sinne with greedinesse, who take pleasure in all vnrighteousnesse, who loue the wages of iniquitie, who obey sinne in the lust thereof, who take thought to fulfill the desires of the flesh, with full consent and heartie good will, giving vp themselves to be ruled by the counsels of Satan, and their wicked hearts. In which condition of a wretched sinner, you may obserue two things remarkable.

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1 How strangely base and degenerat mans nature is growne, who being a most noble Creature, made for the most honourable purposes and services in the world, is now growne so vile and extreemly base, so farre forgetfull of his duty and the dignity of his creation, as to be willing in- stead of the free and happy service of God and goodnes, to put himsele into a most ignominious slauerie vnto Diuels and vile affections. Naturally we all loue libertie & choose rather the losse of life, then of it, and only violence & fraude can bring vs or keepe vs in bondage : But sinne hath pre- uailed with vs against nature and so taken off from vs the edge of all vertuous and manly resolution, that of our owne accorde we offer our selues vnto it, being put in fetters and manicles by our owne corruptions, yea this slauerie men count their only liberty in somuch that when they be called vnto freedom, haue their ransome offered them, and all meanes of escape laid before them, yet they choose to be slaues still.

2 How Difficult a matter ti's for a man to come out of this bondage, surely he that loues the prison better then his enlargement its pitty there should be any meanes of his de- livery, and ti's hazard if they be sought he wil not accept of them. That servant who in the seventh yeere of his bon- dage did so loue his master that he would not goe out free, he was by the law to serue his maister for ever afterwarde *Exod. 21.5.* Hee that would not be free when he might should not afterwards when happily he would. And so it is with the servants of sinne when once they beare a good af- fection to their Master and are so far bewitched as to hold themselues well apayd with his service. Then are their eares nayled fast to the postes and gates of Hell, or rather with Sifera a nayle is stricken through their temples and at one stroke they loose both life and liberty for ever. So that vn- lesse that strong man make a forcible rescue of them out of the hands of these tyrants they doe never escape from

this

this miserable thraldome.

2. *Vn willing bondage:* as when a man is taken prisoner by the sword in battle, or circumvented by some stratagem or fraudulent guile. Such is the Condition of Godly men many times who by some furious, and vehement assault of temptation are wounded, overthrowne, taken, led away captiue and clapt vp in irons vnder the guard of some strong vnruely lust, or other, or else by some subtle sleight and snare privily laid for their soules haue their heels intrapped in the ginne, and for a while are caught as a prey for Sathan. But now during this straightnesse, what sighes and sorrowes doe possesse the Godly heart? How tedious and irksom is this bondage? How doeth he long till his heart bee againe enlarged, that hee may run the race of Gods Commandments? Life it selfe is vnpleasant till this liberty be obtained againe. Wherefore many a hartie prayer is sent vp to Heaven dayly to intreate God for his enlargement, willingly doth he embrace all meanes of freedome, gladly doeth he run and rest in him that onely bringeth deliverance vnto captiue prisoners, with the Israelites in Ægypt he is even weary of his life for the oppression and cruell tyrannie vnder which he is holden, which makes him in the bitterness of his soule cry out vnto God for deliverance fro his heavy bondage. Often taking vp that Complaint of the Apostle *Rom. 7. 24.* [*O Wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death*] These are the severall degrees of this bondage which was the second part proposed to be handled.

3 I come in the third place to consider *the greatnesse and grievousnes of this spirituall bondage:* which will appeare by comparing it with outward bodily slavery. Now spirituall slavery is worse then corporall in three respects.

1 *In regard of multitude of masters:* In corporall seruitude 1 master may haue many seruants, but for 1 servant to haue two or more masters is a thing vnreasonable and vnpossible.

suppose

suppose they were both good; much more if they bee bad. Miserable therefore is the estate of a sinfull man, who when he serues fewest serues three at once, 1 his lusts, 2 Satan working powerfully in his sinfull corruption, 3 God himselfe. For the first: it may be some one wicked affection is his master, and yet there is worke enough to please that, but when many lusts at once beare sway ouer a man like many tyrants in one City, Lord what combats, broyles, and tumults be there in that mans heart: when pride commands one thing, covetousnes another: when vncleane lusts draw one way, ambition another, voluptuousnesse a third, a man had need then to study and take thought for the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof, and all litle enough to please these hard and cruell taskmasters. Again he hath another master, and that is Satan, who inspires these corrupt affections of mans heart, with much rage and hellish fiercenesse, and is that grād Pharoah who setteth al those inferior officers a work, who therefore is called the [*sprit that worketh in the Children of disobedience*] Ephe. 2. 2. Ouer whom although he alone may seeme to challenge all power and authority as ouer the only subjects of his kingdome, yet wee knowe that besides both these they haue another supream and soveraigne Lord (1) God himselfe, against whose government although they do rebell, yet can they not withdraw themselves from vnder his power and jurisdiction. *God is king let the earth be neuer so vnquiet, and the haters of the Lord shall be subiect vnto him.* He will haue to do with them in spight of their hearts. They feare him as slaues against their wills, both to do his will whilst he vseth them to effect by them his owne most holy purposes, and also to suffer his will in their iustly deserued punishment. Thus wicked men are mastered on all hands, and no way free either from sin or punishment.

2 *In regard of the meanes of escape:* a servant hardly vsed may find meanes to shift himselfe of his master; It is not so

with a sinner; runne away from his master he cannot; for he beares him alwayes about with him in his bosome, his sinne still keeps him company, and goe he whither he will Satan doggs him, stands at his right hand, nay possesseth his very heart, so plying him with temptations and ill suggestions, that he cannot goe a foote from his service. Tis true the case is so sometimes with a wicked man that he changeth his master, but seldome comes a better. If he escape the tyranny of one sinfull affection, he falls vnder the command and power of another as bad. So you shall haue a very spend-thrift turne a miserable niggard: but this is only like a prisoner that remoues his bolt from one legg to another, and such exchange is only done vpon compact: He leaues one vice that he may the more freely giue himselfe to another; so that he changes his master but not his servile condition. Some raigning sinne or other will alwayes cleaue to his soule, lie downe with him in his graue, and sinke him downe to Hell. And as for the eye of Gods reuanging iustice he sees it open vpon him, to take notice of his doings, and his hand alwayes listd vp to smite him, trembling alwayes to thinke that he hath no meanes to hide his sinne from Gods knowledge, no power to prevent, no strength to beare the heauy stroke of his wrath when it shall light vpon him.

3. *In respect of the reward,* the world hath scarce afforded masters so without all humanity, Tyrannicall and cruell, as not to be pleased with the faithfull seruice of a slaue, or not to reward him in some degree of courtesie for his seruice. A sinner is miserable both wayes as he cannot please his master, so he cannot hope for a reward. For take a man that hath quite spent himselfe in the seruice of some one of these imperiall and cruell Lords, who hath done all that he can in giying full content and satisfaction wnto them, yet they rest not; there are yet new commands and further injunctions, so that when it seemed, villany was come to the height, and that mens wits and strengths did faile them for further

plots

plots and practises, there's yet a powder plott behind, some new, strange, vnthought of piece of bad seruice to be performed. Sinne and Satan are restlesse and mercyleffe, tyrants neuer contented, still exacting, crying, craving, compelling to new tributes and homages. And now when a man hath worne out himselfe in their seruice, spent his yeares and strength, his wealth and good name, and body and soule, and al vpon them, what is then his reward for this his trusty and true seruice? A courtesy thinke you? Nay a very Hell of vnkindnesse, shame, reproach, misery, and many other punishments euen in this life, but for that other Hell damnation, fire, snares, and brimstone, and stormy tempests of Gods furious indignation: this is their portion and the guerdon of their obedience. Satan did for a while promise faire and performe little, helping them to enjoy some pleasures of sin for a season; but this seeming kindnesse was but coloured cruelty, all being nothing but a sweet sauce to make him swallow downe those morfels of poyson, the fierie venome whereof shall afterwards drinke vp his spirit, and inflame his soule with euerlasting burning,

Foolish men and vawise that take such paines to be miserable; But how should it be otherwise, when men are seruants to Satan? But rebels against God. In vaine do they expect any other reward for their seruice, then the severest punishment of their rebellion.

Thus I haue opened vnto you according as I haue bin able, the nature, degrees, & quality of this spirituall bondage of sinne. It remaineth now to make some vse and application of that which hath benne deliuered.

The first vse shall be for the discouery of a great error in the world committed by men, in iudging their owne and other mens conditions. It is the common opinion of most, that if a man liue out of danger of law, and haue wherewith to pay euery man and keepe him out of debr and feare of the prison, if he can liue vpon his owne and be beholding to

Vse. 1.

no man, if he can set his foote to the best mans in the parish, and be able to make his part good in any suit or quarrell, caring as little for such a great man, as the great man cares for him, if he can ouer-bear his enemies, and trample vpon any that he takes against; If he can go whether he list & do what he pleaseth, liuing idly in pleasures vpon other mens labours; if he be able to sin boldly, to satisfie any disordered affection without controule, hauing power in his hand to overcome a poore Minister, that he shal not dare to reprove him, or money enough in his purse to out-bribe the authority, & seuerity of the law, such a man as this that liues with out feare or care, he is esteemed the only man that leads a free life, and liues at his own command. Thus men iudge of others and of themselues, 'whil't they looke no farther then that which is outward, appearing to sense: But they must knowe that every freeman in a ciuill estate, is not a free subject of Gods kingdome; No: there be that seed dainty, lie soft, goe richly cladd, liue lazily, and who take their fill of worldly pleasures in all licentiousnesse, who yet are as arrant slaues as any that serue in a Gally. Do but turne their inside outward, and you shall see ever whole legions of Diuels domineering ouer them, pride, covetousnesse, ambition, envie, malice, vncleane desires, with a number of such like black and hellish lusts raigning in their soules, vnder the command whereof they are haled this way and that, in all seruile obedience euen like slaues bought and solde in a market. A vaine thing t'is for these men to bragge of their nobility, gentrie, of the freedome and ingeniousnesse of their education or living. For let them know that a mans honour is his honestie and landitie; his perfect freedome is the faithful, service of his God. He is truly free, gentle, and noble, thats truly gracious. Swearing, lying, gaming, whoring, covetousnesse, gaping after a few pounds of gold and silver, foolish loue of gay apparell, restless pursute after two or three words and titles of honour, with the like are these the

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employments of a braue, free, generous, and noble spirit? Farre be it from any man to thinke so, seruile and base disposition: they be that subiect themselues, to such wicked and vnworthy affections, nor can any be honest, or honorable who hath such masters. This the Apostle concludes, *Rom. 6. 20.* [*When yee were the seruants of sinne, yee were free from righteousness.*] And it must needs be a base and dishonest seruice wherein t'is free to be, and to do any thinge saving that which is honest and righteous. Wherefore let no man fall into the error of the Iewes here noted in this text, boasting much of their freedome and dignitie, because they were borne of *Abraham*, & liued not in bodily seruitude, lest they heare also that which Christ here replied vpon these Iewes [*who so committeth sinne is the seruant of sinne*] and againe [*if yee were Abrahams Children, yee would doe the works of Abraham*] *vers. 39.* But now [*yee are of your Father the Diuell because the lusts of your Father yee will doe*] *vers. 42.*

2 The second vse of this point shalbe for admonition, *Vse 2.* that each one do make triall of his estate, whether he be the seruant of sinne yea or no? For which purpose the Apostle hath set vs downe a golden rule, *Rom. 6. 16.* [*knowe yee not that to whomsoever yee giue your selues as seruants to obey, his seruants yee are to whom yee obey, whether it be of sinne vnto death, or of obedience vnto righteousness.*] T'is not the Liverie or Cognizance of Baptisme, t'is not the name of Christian, t'is not the outward profession of religion that makes a distinction betweene the seruants of God, and of sinne. We haue a fairer marke to know them by, and that is Obedience. This tels vs certainly to whom they belong. He that obeys God he is Gods seruant, he that obeys sinne, let him protest or professe neuer so much devotion to Gods service, yet he is for all that the seruant of sinne and no better. Well then the triall is now easie, and requires no more but this, that you bring your thoughts home to your selues,
duely

duely considering whom you do vsually serue vnto, whether God in obeying his holy commandments, or your owne sinfull flesh and Satan in following their counsels,

Doest thou in thy heart serue the law of God, consenting to all the commands thereof as most good and holy, endeavouring as much as possibly thou art able to do whatsoeuer it biddeth thee, holding a constant resolution to please God in all things whatsoever. If thy conscience can truly say yea, then maist thou reioyce in the honourable title of being the servant of God. On the other side dost thou commit sinne as our sauiour speaks here, that is, dost thou willingly and ordinarily, make a practise of breaking Gods holy law, following euery lewd course that Satan leads thee to, and giving scope to thy vngodly desires? yea is there any one particular sinne that raignes ouer thee, wherein thou liuest wittingly and wilfully howeuer thou forsake others? If thy conscience say yea, then know that as yet thou art a miserable bondman and seruant vnto corruption, hearken therefore in the last place to

Use. 3.

3 The third vse wherewith I will conclude this point, and that is an exhortation to perswade those that find themselves in bondage vnto sinne to endeavour by all means to gett themselves at libertie. To men in prison or bodily seruitude, this exhortation were needlesse; but vnto the seruants of sinne, tis most necessary to vse all perswasions to make themselves freemen. Two motiues there are that ordinarily preuaile with all men, to seeke for a change of their present condition, *viz.* 1. the euill of the present estate in which they are. 2 The good of another whereto they may come: both are seriuoslie to be thought on in this businesse, forasmuch as there is no estate worse then the slauerie of sin and punishment: nor any better then the libertie of grace and glorie. Wherefore let me earnestlie entreat you to bend your meditations vpon these two points. First thinke with your selues how miserable a thing it is, for a man to liue all

daies

dates of his life, like a slaue and die like a villaine, how wo-
full is the case of that poore creature, which is at the com-
mand of euery base affection led and driuen hither and thi-
ther, according as euery wicked desire and hellish inspirati-
on shall prouoke it, wearying it selfe in the wayes of wic-
kednes, and taking a great deale of paines to worke out its
owne everlasting miserie. Thinke what strange folly it is for
a man to content himselfe with a few poore commodities &
pleasures, that sinne can afford for a day or two, the very
enjoyning whereof do but make him more vnhappy: No
man that is wise would buy the greatest of such conten-
ments, for one of the panges of an ill conscience, which ac-
compane them. The time comes on when he must part with
all his delights, and be turn'd out of the world naked of all
comfort, grace and fauour. This is it that cuts him to the
heart, and one serious thought of it quite dasheth all his
jollity and contentment, Feares are vpon him on euery
side, making him to liue vncomfortable because he knowes
he shall die vnhappy. But now turne our thoughts on the
other side, and consider how happie and glorious the con-
dition of the Saints is, whom God by his grace hath set at
libertie, from the service of sinne. Whether you looke vpon
them here in this life in the estate of grace, or hereafter in the
estate of glorie, their freedome is euery way blessed and de-
sireable. Free they are from the commanding power of sin,
being now led by the spirit of Christ, and not by the spirit
of the Diuell: free from the terrors of an euil conscience: free
from the terrors of death, hell, and iudgment: free vnto eu-
ry noble employment in Gods seruice, apt to pray much,
readie to heare much, able to meditate much, delighting in
sanctifying the Sabbath, chearefull, forward and willing
hearted to every good worke. A blessed estate if we haue
either grace or witt to iudge aright of it. I confesse grace-
lesse fooles haue another esteeme of it: Tell them of praying,
reading the word of God, singing of Psalmes, hearing and
repeating

repeating of Sermons, and keeping of the Sabbath ye kill them dead, & rather they had, you ſhould ſet the to any the painfullſt drudgerie in the world : Counſell them to reſtaine gaming, drinking and ill companie, to bridle their vngodly and naughty affections, to conuerſe with ſuch and ſuch men of godlie and religious liues, and to be content to be ruled by reaſon and Gods word. All this is euen as much as if you ſhould put them in the ſtockes, or clap a paire of fetters on their heeles. Let them liue in a familie where all exerciſes of religion are ſtricklie obſerued, and no libertie giuen to any lewd praſtiſe, they are as wearie of it as a priſoner of the Tayle, or one that is in little eaſe, and they thinke it ſeauen yeares till they be gone to ſome other place, where they may liue as they liſt. Thus men of peruerſe minds, and corrupt judgments cenſure Gods ſeruiſe to be no better then a ſad, dull, wearifome, and ſlauiſh drudgerie. Vngodlie men, that thinke theirs no mirth but in madneſſe; noſport but in doing miſchiſe; no contentment but in pleaſing the Diuell and wicked luſts, no libertie at all but in licentiousneſſe of liuing. Be (I beſeech you) better informed, and knowe that a ſubieſt is a free man though he ſerues his Prince and obey his lawes: A Sonne is a freeman althoughe he liue in feare and awe of his Parents : A ſervant is a freeman though he liue in conformity to the lawes of a Chriſtian maſter, and the orders of a Chriſtian familie. And ſo a Chriſtian man is then free, yea moſt free when hee ſubmits himſelfe to the lawes of God, as an obedient ſubieſt of his kingdome. This freedome he enjoyes in part in this life, but fully in the world to come, when he ſhall be perfectly freed from all ſinne and miſerie, when there ſhall be no feare of being vnhappy, becauſe no poſſibilitie of being ſinfull. Certainly my Brethren, if there be in vs any ſenſe of our preſent miſerie, or expectation of the future happineſſe of the Saints, we cannot chooſe but ſigh within our ſelues with many prayers, wiſhes, and longing deſires, that we al-

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so may be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into this glorious liberty of the sonnes of God.

If now (for conclusion of all) you aske me by what meanes this freedome may be obtained: I answer briefly, there is no meanes but one, and that is Iesus Christ. All the libertie we haue is his purchase and from his gift, for as you haue heard, we are bondslaues vnto sin, partly in regard of the punishment of it, partly in regard of the ouer-ruling power thereof. Now t'is Christ that sets vs at libertie from both. Christ by his blood purgeth vs from all our sinnes, by taking the guilt and punishment thereof from vs. Christ by his spirit delivers vs from the power and dominion of sinne, that it rains not in our mortall bodies, hauing sanctified vs by sending the holy Ghost into our hearts. For *[where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty]* as the Apostle speakes, 2. Cor. 3. 17. So that euery way Christ is he that bestowes on vs our manumission, according as he himselfe here speaketh *[if that sonne shall make you free, then are you free indeed]*. wherefore this only remaines that we should goe vnto Christ, seeke and sue vnto him for our enlargement, intreat him to heere the crye of a prisoner and captiue, and in compassion of thee to afford his helping hand for thy delivery. Pray him to put himselfe betweene Gods wrath and thy soule, making peace for thee in heauen, by his bloody and meritorious sacrifice, pray him to send forth into thine heart, the spirit of sanctification, to regenerate and renew all the powers of soule & body, freeing them from that law of sinne which naturally is in thy members, that by the power of that inward grace, thou maiest be able thenceforth to giue vp thy soule and bodie vnto God, as seruants of righteousness and holinesse. Confesse to him and say: *O Lord othor Lords besides thee haue ruled over me*, who haue robbed me of all grace, peace, comfort, happinesse, honour and libertie, long haue I liued in greivous thraldome, miserably oppressed and streightned on every side, Satan, the world,

the affections of sin haue plaid the vnmercyfull tyrants ouer me, I haue bin wholly at their command, thinking speaking and doing every wicked thinge they haue suggested vnto me, when I would do any good, euill is present with me and aboute me, and I am hedged with such a world of encumbrances, that I cannot tell which way to get out. Now Lord helpe me, breake these my bonds, vnloose these cords wherewith I am tyed, free me from this streightnesse, and bring my soule out into a large place. Vndoe the works of of the Diuill, restraine his power, destroy his kingdome, and vtterly overthrow the dominion of sinne within me, be thou my Lord and King, and do thou rule over me: let thy word command me, thy Spirit lead me, thy power incline me to all subiection vnto thee. Bid me doe what thou pleasest, and make me doe it, forbid me what thou dislikest, and keepe me from doing it, perswade me by faire meanes, and if stubborne force me by fowle, exercise ouer me all the authoritie of a Father, of a Master, of a King, of a God. I submitt me to all and am content by any meanes to be ouer ruled, so I may become a faithfull seruant in thy house, and an obedient subiect of thy kingdome. This my seruice is my freedome, this freedome is my happinesse, and for mee to bee thus free and happie is thine honour. Nowe therefore take vnto thee the glorie of all, and except of my seruice who hast purchased my libertie: vnto thee O Christ I owe my soule, much more my obedience, I yeeld thee both and all that I haue or can doe, take all, command all, protect, sanctifie, and saue all.

FINIS.



HOSEA. 4. 6.

*My people are destroyed for lacke of knowledge : because
thou hast reiected knowledge, I will also reiect thee, that
thou shalt be no Priest to me ; seeing thou hast forgotten
the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.*



Hese words containe a short declaration of the miserable estate of the Church of Israel in the daies of the holy Prophet, when the people they were ignorant, the Priests they were negligent, both were growne monstrously wicked, and all werelikelly to bee out of hand most severely punished.

The partes of this verse are two.

I The sinne and punishment of the people ; their sinne is ignorance, want of knowledge of God, his worship and service ; their punishment is destruction, or cutting off ; partly by temporall iudgements the Sword, Pestilence, Famine and Captivitie ; which for their ignorance with other sinnes should come vpon them ; partly by spirituall and eternal iudgments in their certaine condēnation in Hell fire.

And to the glory of my

[My people are destroyed for lacke of knowledge.]

2 The sinnes and punishment of the Priests who are in the next place particularly questioned as chiefe authors of that ignorance which was among the people: their sinne is, that: *They reiected knowledge and forgot the law of their Gods*. The latter clause giues vs the meaning of the former: The law that was prescribed vnto the Priests the sonnes of *Leui* is expressed Deut. 33. 10. [*They shall teach Jacob thy iudgements and Israell thy Law*] &c. yet more fully, Mal. 2. 7. [*The Priests lippes should preserve knowledge and they should seeke the law at his mouth, for he is the messenger of the Lord of Hosts.*] This then was the covenant that God had made with the sonnes of *Leui*; that besides the offering vp of sacrifices for the people; he should provide for the instruction of the people in matters of religion: for which purpose they are enioyned, 1. To haue the knowledge of Gods will for themselves, that the law of God might be sought at their mouth and knowledge preserved in their lips. 2. To be readie and carefull to teach the same vnto the people; so farre as concerned their duty to know and practise. Now at this time these Priests *had forgotten* i.e. broken the covenant of *Leui*; and transgressed the commaundement which God of old had given to th; Priesthood: being guilty of a double fault.

1. Ignorance that they were not themselves men of knowledge, such as were skilful and learned in the vnderstanding of the law able to informe others; but were as the Pharises and Scribes in after times, *Blinde leaders of the blinde*.

2. Negligence that they tooke no care in teaching the poore ignorant people according as they were bound by their office. Both these faults are signified vnto vs when the Prophet saith [*That the Priests had reiected knowledge*,] meaning that they were ignorant themselves, and negligent towards others: They had no knowledge for their owne part, or if any, yet they despised to teach it to others. A fault

no

no way to be tolerated in such men : & therefore in the next place you haue their punishment ; which is conformable to their sinne : They would not doe their dutie, God would discharge them of their office ; *they reiect knowledge* with scorn and loathing of it, (so the word is *NONA*) God with as much disdain *reiects them* from being Priests vnto him : *They had forgotten Gods law*, God would likewise forget them and their posteritie , leaving them without reliefe when their deserved shame and misery should come vpon them. Which fell out accordingly at the finall destruction of the kingdome of Israell , when Priests and people fared alike and were all carried away into perpetuall captiuitie; where they and their posterity remained ever.

The words being thus in brife opened to you, out of them I commend to your observation this generall point of instruction, *viz.*

Ignorance in matters of religion bee it in whomsoever is a hatefull and dangerous sinne.

Deff.

If it bee in people 'tis naught , if in ministers 'tis much worse , in whomsoever it be 'tis a sinne wherewith God is highly displeased and which he wil one day seuerely punish. That the truth of this may appeare vnto you I shall endeavour to vnfolde vnto you the Qualitie and Danger of this sinne a little more at large : because as ignorance is a common fault , so men haue a common opinion that it is a very small offence, scarce any at all, You will iudge otherwise, If you will duly consider of it in these three respects.

1. *The nature of it.*

2. *The causes of it.*

3. *The effects of it.*

1. For the nature of it you must knowe that ignorance is a foule blemish of mans nature ; a want of that perfection which should be in vs, if matters were now with vs, as whe God created vs, we were made after gods Image, and a singular part of that Image was our knowledge, and the most

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excellent part of our knowledge was the vnderstanding of all diuine matters touching God and goodnes, so farre forth as it was needfull for vs to vnderstand them. Now nature it selfe that hath planted in every one an vnmesurable desire of knowing much, leades vs also to iudge how incomparable an ornament it is, where it may be attained.

When wee thinke vpon the infinite knowledge of God, or vpon that excellent measure of knowledge in the Angels and blessed Saints departed, or in *Adam* in his innocencie, none is so stupid, and dull as not to admire it in them and to wish for the like in himselfe, so farre as he might be capable of it. In which case when we looke backe from them to our selues, who can choose, but hang downe his head for very shame and grieve to see God, and these blessed creatures inhabiting in so glorious a brightnes and light somnes whilest himselfe dwels in darkenes compassed about with a blacke night of ignorance, error, and obscuritie: He seeth as much difference betweene himselfe and them, as between him that trauailes by the cleare sunne-shine and one that walkes by a candle. Knowledge is like the sunne in the world, or the eie in a mans face: nothing would be more ruefull, and dismall then the world without the light of the sun, nor is any deformity in the face more notable then the want of an eie: And certainly there is nothing more vglie to behold, then that soule which is darkned in its vnderstanding through blindnes and ignorance, being destitute of the knowledge of God, of Christ, of grace, of Religion; the knowledge whereof is both light, and life vnto the soule.

2 In the next place let vs consider the causes of mans ignorance, and they are two, both very bad according as the effect is.

1 The first is *Adams* sinne from whose fall this naturall corruption and weakenes is derived vnto vs. Hee sinned; and we in him: both are punished among other great losses, with the losse of those glorious abilities of our vnderstanding.

ding part. It had once a power and large capacity to comprehend all things both naturall & divine: but at this time a very great weakenes and dimnesse of sight is fallen vpon it in discerning naturall things: and for the knowledge of God and spirituall things it is growne even starke blinde. Hence then is that first bond of ignorance which wee may call *naturall and invincible*. *Naturall*, because every sonne of *Adam* brings it with him into the world by the course of his generation and birth: forasmuch as every one is borne weak-sighted with this infirmity and disability in his vnderstanding. Therefore in infants there is more then *ignorantia pura negationis*: for being sinfull, ignorance is a part of their originall corruption, and so tis also, *prava dispositionis*, they not only know not by reason of age; but are ill disposed to know by reason of the disability of their sinfull nature. Again this ignorance is termed *invincible* or vnavoidable, because the naturall man alwaies continues in it, and cannot by his owne strength ever get out of it: but only by the helpe of Gods spirit outwardly affording the meanes of holy knowledge & inwardly enlightning the minde to vnderstand them aright as the Apostle sheweth.

2. Cor. 3. 18.

2. Our owne sinne *viz* wilfull rebellion in neglecting, and despising all holy meanes of knowledge: when meanes are not they seek not after them, when they be offered, they refuse them, or vse them with al carelesnesse and disrespect: when men winke against the light, closing vp their eies that it may not shine id their hearts: when they will none of wisdomes instructions, but stubbornely say to God, *de- Iob. 21. 14.*
part from vs, for we desire not the knowledge of thy waies. Hence is that other kinde of ignorance which we call, *affected*, a fouler fault by farre then the former: when men know nothing and yet scorne to learne anie thing: they will not heare, nor conferre, nor read, nor pray, nor vse any meanes to get knowledge, but are content to sit still in dark-

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nes, as the Egyptians were sometimes forced to doe, not stirring one way or other. A miserable condition, but I shall tel you the reason of it: they abide in darknes, because they are loth to see and to be seene. Should they come abroad in the light, their manifold deformities and abominable corruptions would be discovered by the light of the word to their shame and grieve: they should meete with many reproofes of their lewd courses, many perswasions to piety and obedience: all which they can by no meanes endure, it is death to them to heare of their faults, when they are resolved not to amend them: and they will be wilfullie ignorant of that, which being once knowne would often trouble their consciences. This reason of mans wilful affected ignorance, Christ giues, *Ioh. 3. 19. 20.* [*Light came into the world, and men loved darknes rather then light, because their deedes were euill: for every man that euill doth, hates the light, neither commeth to the light lest his deeds should be re-proved.*] These are the causes of this ignorance, originall corruption disabling vs to know, actuall stubborneffe and frowardnesse, making vs vnwilling to know: wherefore ignorance must needs be ill, that hath so ill causes, where the roote is rottennesse, you can looke for no fruit but corruption.

3. Come we in the third place to the effects of it & you shall see it is euill and hurtfull in that regard also. The fruits of ignorance are two. 1. sinne. 2. punishment. 1. sinne. Ignorance is a sinne it selfe and it is a cause of many sinnes: There be mother sinnes and this is one of them, a fruitfull mother not of devotion, as blinde Papiſts would haue vs belieue, but of iniquitie and impietie. An ignorant man is a wicked man; an ignorant Priest is a wicked Priest, an ignorant people a sinnefull people. Tis plaine by this very chapter. [*There is no truth; nor mercy nor knowledge of God in the land*] saith the prophet; *ver. 1.* What followes thence, why this [*by swearing and lying, and killing, and stea-*

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The mischief of ignorance.

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ling and committing adultery they breake out and blood toucheth blood, vers. 2. Againe, [*Israell doth not know, my people doth not consider,*] saith the Prophet *Isaiah*. (*chapt. 1. v. 3.* what of that they might yet be devout, and holy might they not? No: read the complaint that followes thereupon, vers. 3. [*Ah sinnefull nation, a people laden with iniquitie, a seed of evil doers, children that are corrupters, they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the holy one of Israel, they are gone away backward*) see the fruits of ignorance whereby men become Apottates from God, wicked in themselves, & corrupters of others: for so it is, they that know no good themselves haue yet knowledge enough to teach another to doe euill. not can this bee otherwise: for as much as where the heart is euill the life wilbe wicked. Now an ignorant person is deuoid of grace. So saith the Apostle touching the Gentiles, that they were [*strangers from the life of God through the ignorance that was in them, because of the blindness of their hearts,* Eph. 4. 18.) that is, they were destitute of all sauing and quickning power of Gods spirit, they had no grace, no faith, no feare; no loue, no true affection to God or any spirituall goodnes; they had neither care nor desire of that they knew not: whence vers. 19. followes immediatly their lewd liues in that [*being without sense* (of goodnes) *they gave themselves vnto wantonnesse, so worke all uncleannes even with greedines.*] For what will not a gracelesse ignorant man doe, who knowes not, but he may doe any thing? He is blinde and cannot choose but stumble at every blocke, dash himselfe against every post, tumble into every ditch: he is a ship without a Master that runnes at adventure with any winde, vpon any rocke or shelve. It is Christs comparison, *Ioh. 12. 35.* [*He that walketh, in the darke knoweth not whether he goeth*] and so is an ignorant man; he travels in the night: hee cannot see his way before him, he misseth at every turning, hee must leape hedge and ditch, and yet stil the farther he goeth, the more he wanders.

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No good worke he takes in hand but hee failes strangely in the performance, in everie course of his life hee goeth astraie through his great folly, and before he is aware runnes vpon a thousand snares and temptations, the Diuel hath set for to take him. You see then ignorance is an occasion of manie sinnes: but in particular let me giue you warning of two speciall faults that ignorant men vsually runne into. 1 Inconstancie in religion whether it be in opinion or practise, for when men take vpon them the profession of religion believing; and practising many things, but are not able to giue an account of their faith, nor tell any sound reason why, vpon what grounds, to what end they do such and such things: can it be expected, but that if these bee strongly sett vpon and put to it indeed, they will be drawne without much adoe to change their minds? We knowe what the Apostle speaks of *those silly women, who were alwayes learning, and yet neuer came to the knowledge of the truth*: they were the fittest to become a prey vnto false teachers and deceauers, who *creeping into their houses & hearts, by cunning insinuations deluded them, and led them captiue to any erroneous opinion or practise.* 2. *Tim. 3. 6. 7.* Among vs, my brethren, in these times wee haue to blame men as well as women for this fault. The intolerable ignorance of most is sufficient witnesse to all the worlde, that there are not a few whose religion is yet to choose, and for ought they knowe to the contrary, another may be as good as that which they professe for the present, they be Protestants in shew, but they knowe as little what belongs to true religion as they doe of Popery: They bee no more able to distinguish betweene true religion and false, then an infant betweene the right hand and the left. And therefore if at any time a Priest, or Iesuit, or other cunning Papist set vpon them, they are straight way puzzled and staggered: they haue nothing to answer in defence of their religion, but you shall see them presently fetch't ouer with fine words, and halfe perswaded

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to be of another opinion: yea did not chull respects & temporall incōueniences beate them off from poperie more the the knowledge or hatred of such errors as papists maintain: there is nothing could keepe them in that case from revolting vnto their side.

It is a needfull point, my brethren, to be thought on by vs, & that seriously, especially in these euill daies, wherein Satan and his complices doe on all hands assault the Church of God, seeking to swallow her vp. Our brethren abroad are in fore affliction, yet they forsake not their God, lets pittie them, and pray for them, that they may coninue faithfull even to the death, for our selues at home, God he knows we are as sinfull a people and haue deserued as sharp a triall as our neighbour: let vs pray still for the life and safetie of our King, the peace of our Church, the welfare of our state, and let each one looke to his owne particular walking in the light, whilst we haue the light getting knowledg and wisdom, & faith, & zeale, that we may stand fast in the profession of Gods true religiō, whatsoeuer danger may betide vs. This of the first fault of ignorant men. The second followes.

2. Securitie or senselesnesse in regard of sinne or punishment. An ignorant person knowes not what it is to sinne, and therefore dares commit it, hee apprehends not what punishments belonge to sinne, and therefore he makes no scruple of them: hee sees no danger before it comes: & so he feares it not: when punishment comes vpon him he knowes not why or from whome it comes, tis with him as with Ephraim, Hos. 7. 9. [*Strangers haue deuoured his strength and he knowes it not: yea gray haire are here & there vpon him, yet he knowes not*] many markes of Gods anger are vpon him, yet he knowes & apprehends not by whome, or wherefore he is smitten. You shall haue many a man pine away in his estate, vblest and vnthriving in all his businesses crost with vngracious and disobedient Children, vexed with euill seruants and vnfaithfull, troubled with an vnquiet & discontented familie, tormented with vniust suites in law,

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slandered in his good name by false reports raised of him; yea disquieted in his soule with griefes and feares: yet mark this man in all his vexations, & you see him sensible of nothing; but present paines: he thinkes of nothing lesse then of Gods hand and his owne sinne in all this: God smites him for his covetousnesse, vncleanesse, prophanesse, vnbeliefe, Atheisme; with the like notorious finnes he liues in: but the ignorant wretch never considers of this, nor doth he any ior the more either turne to God that punisheth him, or from his finnes for which he is punished: he toiles & moiles, rides and runnes vp and downe, tries now this way, then that, entreates one, bribes another, after all complaints of his hard fortune and ill successe in all his affaires. And yet see in the middle of all this trouble he sinnes as much as euer he did, he sweares, he drinckes, and cosens his neighbour as much as euer, he is as irreligious as he was before, nor any dutie of religion performed by himselfe or with his familie more then at another time? No; he keeps his old wont & ventures on still in his evill courses, hoping that times may change & matters amend one day. If he can but make any shift to escape the present smart; that is all that he lookes after. Thus is the condition of many soules, who doe evill, and are plagued yet doe evill still: because they be besotted, & haue not the wisdom to see their sinne, or feare their punishment.

Thus much of the first effect of ignorance *viz* sinne, the second followes.

2. Punishment: [*my people perisb*] which is partly in this life, partly in that which is to come. In this life God often plagues them, and puts them to shame. This was one cause of the captiuitie of the Iewes as it is *Esay. 5. 13.* [*therefore my people is gone into captiuiy, because they had no knowledge*]

They seldome escape here: but hereafter they are sure to smart for it. Ignorance is the highway to hell: and ignorant men, though they cannot choose but wander, yet they cannot goe so farre wide as to misse hell. It is the Apostles sen-

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gence 2. *Thess.* 1. 8. Christ shall shew himselfe *[in flaming fire, rendering vengeance vnto them who doe not know God. &c.]* God will be strange to them in that day, who are now strangers vnto him. He will not know them then, who will none of his acquaintance now: they say to him, *depart from vs we will not know thee*, he shall then say to them, *depart from me, I know you not*, they that know not Gods waies, shall neuer enter into his rest, they liue and die without his feare & out of his fauour. Those that are blind will certainly fall into the ditch, as it is *Matt.* 18. 14. except God doe in time open their eies, to see the danger and preuent it.

These things thus explained, before we come to make application of the point; it will not be amisse in our passage, to touch briefly vpon two questions needfull to be resolved. The first is.

1 *Whether ignorance of a mans dutie, doe in any sort excuse his not doing of it?*

To this I answer in brieft: Ignorance in those things we are bound to know doth not excuse a fault committed by reason of it. The reason is manifest, because one sinne cannot excuse another. Now in this case it is first a sinne not to know our duty, because we were bound to know it: and then it is a sinne not to doe our duty, because we also ought to haue done it. And though wee are so farre from being excused, that we are in a double fault, and deserue double blame, for being ignorant & disobedient; nevertheless this must be observed; that a sinne committed through simple ignorance is not so great a fault as that which is committed through wilfull ignorance or against knowledge. He that sinnes against his knowledge is a notorious and presumptuous offender and deserues severest punishment according to that of Christ. *Luk.* 12. 47. *[That servant that knew his masters will and prepared not himselfe neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes]* and also that of S. James c. 4. 16. 17. *[To him that knoweth how to doe well, and doth it*

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not, to him it is sinne] with a witnesse, a great sinne greatly to be punished. Againe he that sinnes out of willfull ignorance, because carelesly and stubbórnly he neglects & contemnes all meanes of knowledg that are afforded him, this mans fault is not a iot lessened but aggrauated by his ignorance, nor, hath he any excuse in the world for his ill doing, who might if it had pleased him haue knowē the way how to haue done better. But now he that sinnes out of simple ignorance, where there is no froward, scornfull, careles neglect of meanes of knowledg, this mans sinne is somewhat lesse then the others, yet tis a sinne still. This is manifest by that of our saviour *Luke. 12. 48.* [*he that knew it not, yet did commit things worthy of stripes, he shall be beaten with few stripes*] he shall be beaten though he did it out of pure ignorance, yet but with few stripes, & that because he did it ignorantly. Soe Paul somewhat excuseth his persecucion of the Church, because 'twas done out of an ignorāt zeale: but yet foral that he accoūts of himselfe as he was, even at that time a very great sinner. (*I was saith he a blasphemor, and a persecutor, and an oppressor: but I was receiued to mercie because I did it ignorantly through vnbeliese*) *1. Tim. 1. 3.* And in like sort doth the Apostle Peter somewhat qualifie that great sinne of crucifying Christ the Lord of life: wherevnto the commō people and many of the rulers ignorantly consented, being missted and ill advised by the priests, Pharisees, & other malicious enemies of Christ. [*And now, breshren, I know that through ignorance yee did it, as did also your gouernours*] saith Peter to the Iewes, *Acts. 3. 17.* Soe much also our Saviour implies in that speech of his to the Pharises, who proudly arrogated to themselues all knowledg (*If yee were blind yee should not haue sinne*) had they indeed been simple and ignorant, their sinne in persecuting Christ, & opposing the Gospell, had been much lesse hainous. (*But now yee say, we see, therefore your sinne remaineth*) vnexcusable, vnardonable whilst against their knowledgc, they maliciously despise Christ

and his doctrine. *Iohn. 9. 41.* This of the first question, the opening whereof confutes the sillinesse of many ignorant me who think verily because they haue no knowledg, that God will hold them excused for their good meaning sake.

The second question is.

2 *What measure of holy knowledg is required of each one?*

For answer herevnto, you must put a difference between mens Abilities, and gifts of nature or grace: & also between mens callings and diuerse imployments. For the first, all men are not alike qualified with inward abilities; There is not the same fastnesse of memorie, quicknesse of apprehension, soundnesse of iudgmēt in one, that is in another, nor haue all the like benefit of outward helps in their education, for the perfecting of such good parts, as nature hath lent the. Now God deales equally, where he bestows much there he looks for much againe; where he giues little, there he requires but little. He that naturally is slow of witt, dull of conceipts, short of memorie, weake in iudgment, such a one would be pittied and louingly helped forward so farre in knowledg as his weaknesse will giue leaue. And men shall doe ill to lay heauie burdens on those, to whome God hath giuen but weake shoulders to beare them. But when men can shew witt enough in other matters, and haue all abilities of minde to serue their turne in inferior imployments, to apprehend, discourse, plott and contriue masters as they list, and yet the same men, be dunfes in all religious knowledge, they are inexcusable, and must answer for their vnthankfulnesse, & misimployment of that talent, he hath giuen vnto them. Thus there is a difference in regard of mens abilities: there is also a difference in respect of mens diuerse callings. God doth not require the same measure of honour or knowledg of a lay man, which he doth of a minister, of a plaine man, & of a scholler, of a privat person. and of a publike gouernour. Here the rule is. *That God requires of every one so much knowledg, that he may know how in his place to carrie himselfe in*

all wisdom and unblameablenesse. He may not come short, nor yet goe beyond his bounds, but duly considering what belongeth to his place, he must studie to be thoroughly informed thereof, moreouer this must be obserued in generall touching all men, of whatsoever calling or gift: that no man can attaine to any such degree of knowledge, that he should therewith rest himselfe contented, & seeke no farther; the wisest know but in part, & they may know more perfection is to be sought for, but it wil neuer be had in this life, & therefore we must be still struiuing in the knowledg of God: scholars must studie still, Ministers preach, people must heare still, all must grow richer in this treasure of spirituall wisdom. In a word no man must cease learning, till God giue ouer teaching. And know this that the man, who bewailes his ignorance, & daily searches after knowledge, in the vse of good meanes, he shall gaine this advantage, first the little knowledg which he hath shall doe him much good, & then in due time, his stock shall encrease according to that promise *[to him that hath (& vseth it well)] shall be giuen (more) & he shall haue abundance*. Let thus much suffice to be spokē for the vnfolding of the nature of this sinne, Come wee in the last place to make application of all vnto our owne vse.

1 The first vse shall be for reprehension of ignorant persons, whose fault is here declared to be great, and their condition miserable: which notwithstanding, there are in the world many patrons of this sin, who both in opinion and practise defend this sinne and approue it. I shall name vnto you two sorts of them.

1 Papists, who make a direct profession of this shamefull sinne: with them the best way for a man to doe his duty is not to know it at all: and no deuotion is comparable to that which is blind, nor any service like that which is beastly, and voreasonable. Let an ignorant Catholike that canne reade never a letter, nor vnderstand scarce a syllable in the Creede, Lords prayer, Ten commandements, or other part

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of his catechisme, let him yet hold fast by his ghostly fathers
 steau, doe as he bids him, come to Church, and heare Latine
 service, reade latine prayers, doe he knows not what, yea a-
 ny thing the Priest commands him, and then they'le waria't
 him cocksure, from falling into the ditch, be he neuer so
 blind. Let Paul finde fault with zeale without knowledge.
Rom. 10 2.3. Tis no matter what he saith, the'ile contradict
 him to his teeth, and tell vs as they teach their people, that
 ignorance is the best mother of true Catholike devotion. In
 which impudencie some haue gone so farre of late daies, as
 to erect a new order of Friers, whose very rule, & professi-
 on was ignorance of all things except Christ, and the virgin
 Mary. It is not possible that all things, should haue come to
 this passe amongst them, were there not knauerie in the bu-
 sinesse. But the truth is this, Poperie is one great part of the
 kingdome of darknesse, and for the support hereof, it was
 needfull to shutte out the light, for feare of discovering their
 secret abominatiōs. If their deeds were good why doe they
 hate the light? If their opinions were sound, why are they a-
 fraid of Scripture? 'Tis selfe guiltinesse breeds those feares
 and ieaiousies, and that Atheistickall slander of Gods word,
 that the Scriptures are obscure, that the reading of the bible
 will make men hereticks. In short, the best construction we
 can make of their practises in this kinde is, that they mi-
 strust Poperie would downe, if people had but knowledge
 to see their villanies & errors: they see the credite of Priests
 & Friers would downe, who now be the only admired o-
 racles of knowledge among their ignorant people, & which
 is more, *those slow bellies, and euill beasts,* see 'twould cost
 them much paines, and toile to bring their people to know-
 ledge, after so long neglect of that course, wherefore they sit
 still, grow lazie and fat, whilst their people is well enough
 content to be vntaught, & so to perish in their Ignorance,
 Idolatry, and Superstition.

2. Protestants amongst whom we haue a number which
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are papists in their practices, what ever they be in their opinions. Among vs many there be that *have left off to understand and doe good* as it is *psal. 36. 7.* men of ill liues, of ignorant minds, that out of carelesnesse or contempt profit not one iot, either in knowledg or obediēce of the Gospel. This is a raining sinne that spreads farre and wide ouer all quarters of the land, a killing sin that slaies thousands of soules, which fall daily into the pit & snare, before they are aware that euill is toward them. 'Tis the grand factor for hell and that, wherein the diuill hath ever laboured by deepest polices to keepe men from knowledge; either that they might not haue the meanes, or not profit by the, when they had them. What shall we say, my brethren, to the lamentable ignorāce amongst people: shall we excuse it? 'tis not possible. For I demand in the Apostles words. *Rom. 10. 18.* [*haue they not all heard the Gospell? noe doubt the sound thereof hath gone through all the land, and the words thereof vnto the end of the earth*] All meanes of knowledg haue been plentiful amongst vs, Preaching, Catechizing, Printing, and all these for a long time, sixtie yeares and vpwarde, so that one would thinke now all might know the Lord from the greatest to the meanest: and if ever in any, now in our country might be fulfilled that of Habakkuk *c. 2. 14* (*the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glorie of the Lord, as the waters couer the sea*) If in any particular place meanes haue beene scant, and the people haue had but little instructiō, ill may they thriue with their idlenes, by whose negligence Gods people haue perished for lack of knowledg. And if any such heare mee, let them be entreated in the bowels of Christ Iesus, to haue more pittie and compassion on the poore soules, which goe astray, as sheepe which haue no shepheard. But, my brethren, you must know, that this excuse will not serue the turne, neither if ministers wil not teach, we need not learne; No; if they will not, seeke where thou maist, and doe not thou throw away thy selfe, because another is careles of thy safetie.

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safety. But of all what excuse will they haue , who haue
beene borne and bread vp in parishes that haue had preach-
ing almost time out of mind. Here one woulde thinke in re-
gard of time & meanes, men might be teachers rather then
learners; but 'tis nothing so. Here also shall you meete with
hundreds that had need be taught their very *A.B.C.* in mat-
ters of religion: 'tis no marvaile to see children or young mē
ignorant, when you shall haue old men 50. 60. yea 80 years
old , whose gray haire shew that they haue had time e-
nough to learne more witt, yet in case to be set to schoole a-
gain for their admirable simplicitie in the knowledg of reli-
gion. They'le scorne to be questioned, but doe but get them
in a good moode and talke with them about religion, aske
them the meaning of the articles of faith , of the petitions in
the Lords prayer, or of other cōmon points in Catechisme,
and marke their answers , you shall see them so shuffle and
fumble, speake halfe words, and halfe sentences, so hack and
hew at it, that you may almost sweare they speake they
know not what of matters out of their elemēt: though they
be the wisest and craftiest headed men in a parish, take them
in other matters; yet in these things, you would thinke veri-
ly they were borne starke naturals and Idiots : they will
sometimes shape you such strange, absurd, and vnexpected
answers to your questions that when a man cannot choose
but pittie them, he hath much a doe to forbear laughing at
them. Let me tell a story that I haue heard from a reverend
man out of the pulpit , a place where none should dare to
tell a lie; of an old man about sixty, who liued and died in a
parish, where there had beene preaching almost all his time,
& for the greatest part twice on the Lordes day, besides at
extraordinarie times. This man was a constant hearer as any
might be, & seemed forward in the loue of the word; on his
death bed being questioned by a minister, touching his
faith and hope in God : you will wonder to heare what an-
swere he made : being demanded, what he thought of God,

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he answeres that he was a good old man: & what of Christ, that he was a towardly young youth: and of his soule, that it was a great bone in his bodie, & what should become of his soule after he was dead, that if he had done wel he should bee put into a pleasant greene meddow. These answeres astonished those that were present to thinke how it were possible, for a man of good vnderstanding, and one that in his daies, had heard by the least two or three thousand sermons, yet on his death bed in serious manner thus to deliuer his opinion in such maine points of religion, which infants and sucklings should not be ignorant of. But, my brethren, be assured this man is not alone, there be many hundreds in his case, who come to Church and heare much, happily a hundred sermons and a halfe in a yeare: yet at yeares end, are as much the better for al, as the pillars of the Church against which they leane, or the pewes wherein they sit. A matter greatly to be lamented, and sharply reprobued, that wise men, politicke men, graue men, great men, rich men, men that carrie the name of Christians, should yet be such very children in all godly knowledg. Wherefore in the next place let this be for exhortation.

- Vse. 2.* 1 To Ministers, that they would be carefull to teach the people: if people perish for want of knowledge, shall ministers escape who are negligent in teaching? Be sure of it, both smart together, they for their ignorance, these for their negligence: such ministers haue their doome in my text [*because thou hast reiected knowledge, I will also reiect thee.*] *The people shal indeed perish in their sins, but their blood &c.* whose office it was to instruct, admonish, reprove, entreate, and by al meanes to turne the people from their evil waies. Oh that such men would be pleased to consider, that the best service they can doe, the greatest honour they can attaine vnto, is to be faithfull labourers in Gods vineyard! What an honour and happineffe is it to a man, to be made a common blessing vnto all men round about him, to be eies to the blind, legs to

to the lame, a mouth to the dumbe, a staffe to the feeble, a physitian to the sick, a counsellour in hard cases, a watchmā in danger, a captaine in conflicts, so much and much more is a minister vnto his people, if he doe his duty as he ought. And vnworthy they are of that office, who scorne to take the paines that belongs to it, or thinke it an easie, or small matter to saue a soule from death. But happily I speake to them that heare me not: wherefore the next exhortation is.

2 To people, that they would take notice in themselves of this foule sinne to amend it. Some men are ignorant of this like men in the dark, thinking themselves faire, because they see not their owne deformities; Come now then into the light; looke on thy selfe, see what an ignorant wretch thou art, bewaile it, repent of it, amend it. Be ashamed in your selues, of that which you are ashamed of, when any man takes notice of it, blush at your ignorance, and heare what the spirit of God saith to you, *Pro. 1. 22. (How long ye simple ones will ye loue simplicitie &c.)* If a man cal you fooles and simple persons, you'll be angry with him, now God calls you so, be angry with your selues, be ashamed of your selues that God should stil call you simple, scornful, foolish, because ignorant, disobedient men. Say now in thine owne heart, how foolish, how brutish haue I beene? how like a beast, nay how much worse the a beast haue I liued? *The oxe knoweth his owner, the asse his masters crib, but I haue not knowne nor considered ought;* surely I haue not in mee the vnderstanding of man: what folly and simplicitie is this in me, to know any thing, but what I should know, God and his goodnesse, my selfe and my dutie? How many sermons haue I heard in vaine? how often haue I discouraged my minister making him weepe and sigh in secret to see so little fruit of his ministerie. Ignorant I was when he first came to the parish, & now after many yeares am ignorant still. I see young men yea little Children can giue a better reason, yea answer more soundly to points of Catechisme the I can. Think thus

with thy selfe, and then grow into resolution to take a new course, begin to doe that which is never too late to be done, to know God, and which waies thou maist worship and obey him, resolute to take all opportunities, to spare as many houres as thou canst for the purchasing of this heavenly wisdom. And least that here also thou shouldst plead ignorance: that thou wouldst get knowledge if thou knewest which way, hearken a little to some directions. The meanes whereby knowledge will be gotten are these.

1. Hearing the word of God preached: this is the chiefe meanes wherevnto you must giue all diligent heede, God hath appointed it for this end, to the instruction of the ignorant, and it goes accompanied with his speciall blessings to that purpose. Wherefore sit not at home, lie not a bed, when thou shouldst be at Church: Come and come often, especially on the Lords day, and in the weeke too when occasion serues; spare an houre for a sermon as wel as two for a play, or a feast, idle chattering, or doing nothing. When thou comest to Church, come with a mind to learne, set thy selfe in good earnest to heede the Preacher, marke what doctrine he delivers, how he proues, how he applies it. Keepe the point he speakes of in thy memorie as he goes along, and if thou be short witted, helpe thy selfe with thy pen; gaze not, sleep not, talke not, thinke not of this and that businesse, fixe thy eyes vpon the Preacher, and thy thoughts vpon his words, and be sure so to carrie the matter that something may bee gotten by an houres discourse. But there is another thing to be thought on in the second place and that is,

2. Meditation, a duty every way necessary after hearing: men thinke they haue done enough, if they sit out the sermon and hearken attentiuely whilst the preacher is in speaking: but as soone as the preacher hath done, they haue done too: they neither thinke, nor speake more of it, every man sortes himselfe with his friend and companion, and then in Church or Church-yard, or as they goe home, an hundred
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idle questions be asked and answered about this man, and that, this busines, and that, this bargaine, or that, but not a worde touching any thing they heard at Church: so that by the time they come home, the soules of the aire haue picked vp all the seede, that laye scattered and carelessly vncouered, the Sermon is quite fled and gone from their minds. Come to them and clappe them on the shoulders, and saie now for a wager where was the Preachers text, what remember you of the points hee discoursed of; they can tell you no more what hee saide, then the man in the moone. My brethren, I beseech you take notice of this fault, and thinke of it, as that maine cause, why there is soe much preaching and hearing, and yet People doe still remaine as ignorant, as wicked as euer. Here's the cause, the Preacher doth his part, they wil not do theirs, they heare the Sermon at Church and there they leaue it, but never carrie home any thing to make it their owne by often meditating on it. Wherefore remember henceforth that a Sermon is but halfe heard, that is only heard from the preachers mouth. The greatest part is yet behinde to be performed by thy selfe at home. Goe home then, thinke of it as thou art in the way, thinke of it when thou art in thine house: take time to recall things to minde, do it with thy familie, do it with thy selfe; in thy closet, vpon thy bed, say such a sin was reprov'd to day, and I, haue I bene guiltie of it? Such a dutie was vrged vpon me, doe I practise it or no? Such a grace was commended vnto me, haue I such a grace? Such a rule was prescribed me, doe I follow it or not? If men would be perswaded to make triall of this course, thus to digest what they heare, they should finde (as others haue done) a plentifull increase of saving knowledge in a shorte time, whereas now they thrive not a iot, by their daily hearing many yeares together.

3. Conference with those that are able to giue vs resolution in difficult cases: or with those that desire it from vs.

A point wherein men are generally defectiue. Obserue all the discourse of men when they meete together, not the hundred parte is touching religion: you shall haue a table sometimes furnished with as choice men as meates, men of learning, iudgment, and experience in all kinds, able much to benefit others that are present, by seasonable and fitting discourse. Yet tis strange to see two or three howers eaten vp, and nothing spoken to any purpose, for which a man may say when he is gone, that he hath bene the better for their company. As for ordinarie meetings, 'tis so that it is scarce good manners, to moue a question of diuinitie, for feare of marring all the mirth, if you doe, you are like to answer your selfe to your owne question, they are presently mute as fishes, and haue not a word to say. A great dinner there was before and much chat: but such a question is like a stone hurld in among a companie of frogs, that make a fowle noise, but vpon the fall thereof they are straight as still as may be. This is a fault, but not the greatest in this kinde: we will not restraine conference to tables; there be other places, that are happily more fit, the ministers house, the learned mans studie, hither people should resort to enquire and be resolued in points of knowledge, and practises that doe concerne them. But how long shall a Minister sit in his studie, before any of his parish will trouble him about any such matters. Lawyers & Physicians are thronged with clients and patients at all houres, day and night, for aduise about matters of body and estate: but who knockes at the ministers doores calling for his helpe for their soules; S^t tell me how shall I vnderstand such a place of Scripture, make me to conceiue such a point of Diuinitie, aduise me how shall I get such a grace, avoyde such a sinne; such a temptation; what were I best to doe in such a case of conscience. Ministers I am sure complaine much of the backwardnesse of people in this point, not that they loue to be sought to, or look for a fee, but because they seeke their peoples good, and

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and would gladly take all opportunities, to encrease knowledge in them; whose ignorance they cannot but pittie and commiserate. Wherefore my brethren, learne a point of wisdom, to take notice of all doubts, and when in reading or hearing thou meetest with any thing thou vnderstandst not, keepe it in minde till thou mayst haue a fit occasion to get a resolution. Where ever thou comcest be not ashamed to minister occasion of good discourses, that others may be the better for thee, and thou for them before yee part.

4 Priuate reading of the Scriptures, and other bookes tending to Godly instructions. A course if duely obserued that would bring a great deale of knowledge, especially in this our age, where the presse is as fruitfull in good bookes as the pulpit is of good Sermons. No booke of Scripture but you haue the exposition of some learned man vpon it; no point of diuinity, but you shall finde it largely & plainly handled in some treatise or other. A great blessing to this age, if men would be wise to make vse of it, but the trueth is, men haue as little regard of printing as they haue of preaching. Looke to the ordinarie sort of people; they doe not reade scarce one Chapter of the bible in a weeke, I may say in a yeare, so ignorant, that they can hardly finde the booke whence the preacher takes his text, or how to distinguish betweene Apocrypha and Canonically Scripture. How many are there of good sort & fashion that haue read much, and many great volumes, which yet cannot say at eighty years old, that in al their life they haue read ouer the Bible. A booke that is none of the biggest, but is of all the best. What can we pretend for this monstrous negligence? canst thou not reade? blame thy freinds and parents for the time thou wast a Childe; since that blame thy owne folly. Any one may learne to reade, that hath wit to learne any thing. But thou hast no money to buy bookes: what? hast thou mony to spend in a taverne, to play away at Cardes & Dice, to buy lace and needlesse superfluties of apparell, and
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hast thou not monie to buy a Bible ; or any other good Booke? for shame say not so. But I haue no time to read; for any thing else time enough, to doe nothing, to lie a bed till noone, to sit two or three houres at dinner or supper, to goe to such a friend and there spend halfe a day, to such a freind and there spend another, to doe any chare that comes in extraordinarily. Away with those excuses; 'tis certaine, my brethren, there is no calling be it of never so much employment, but of twenty foure hours, they may if they list spare two at the least for religious imployments: yea more if they bee wise and thriftie of their time. But I cannot buy all bookes, nor read all; nor would any man haue thee doe so: but buy some, read some, canst thou not tell which are best and most profitable? then aske counsell of the skilfull, that are able to advise thee. But learning is a hard matter, and 'tis not for plaine folke to vnderstand the Bible. No; is it not? Then God is too blame that hath written a word for the instruction of all, which yet none but schollers should vnderstand: but know this is nothing but an excuse for thy slothfulness, learning is hard, because thou art vnwilling to learn; otherwise the spirit of God hath testified that knowledge is plaine, and easie to him that will vnderstand. And doe but trie, taking but that paines in the studie of religion, which thou doest in many needlesse imployments: and experience shall tell thee, that wisdom is to be found of all that doe seeke her. And yet my brethren because the well is deepe, and you may plead, that you haue not wherewith to draw: let mee tell you in the last place of one meanes more to get knowledge, which blesteth all the forenamed helpes, and that is.

5 Prayers vnto God, that he would giue thee an vnderstanding heart, to know the mysteries of saluation, that he would open thine eyes, to see the wonders of his law. That light which is in thee must come downe from the father of lights, and vnlesse still thou meane to sit in darknesse, thou must

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must haue recourse vnto God, praying him that he would *shine into thy hart to giue thee the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Iesus Christ*. And remember this that he who seeks for the knowledge of matters of religion, by the strength of his owne wit and other naturall parts, without humble and faithfull supplications for Gods assistance in this behalfe; such a man is in danger to be misled into manie erroneous and hereticall opinions; for if in any thing, much more in the matters of religion is that most true: he that is a scholler vnto his owne reason, hath certainelie a scole to his master. Wherefore we are to put on an humble and sober minde, intreating his direction, & submitting our reason to his wisdom.

Now my brethren doe these things and prosper, haue an eare open to heare the word, a heart readie to meditate on it, a tongue seasonable to talke of it, an eie diligent to read it, and with all these ioine heartie praier, that thou maiest vnderstand it aright; and then be thriving and succesfull in holie knowledge: though thy tallent be as yet but small; yet follow this course, and after a verie little paines and patience, thou shalt see for certaine, that this traffique will returne thee ten for one, even a large increase of all spirituall knowledge. The gaine whereof shall bring much glorie, to that thy heavenlie master that set thee on worke, and to thee his good and faithfull servant, a bountifull rewarde for thy labour.

FINIS.

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H B.



H B B. 3. 12. 13.

Take heed lest there be in any of you an euill heart of unbeliefe, in departing from the liuing God, &c.



HE words containe in them a serious exhortation to perseuerance in the profession of the Gospell of Christ. The occasion is from the Comparison which the Apostle makes betweene *Moses* and *Christ*, and betweene the Church of the Iewes, and of the Gentiles vnder Christ; *Moses* and *Christ* agreeing,

in that both are faithfull to him that appointed them in the execution of their office: but they differ, in that *Moses* is but a seruant in the house of God, *Christ* is the sonne, *Moses* gouerned as a delegated officer, *Christ* rules as a soveraigne Lord of the Church, the house which himselfe hath built, hauing purchased it with his blood, reard it vp with his spirit, preserving it by his power, therefore he is justly Lord of it as of his owne, and so he hath the preheminance aboue *Moses*. The Church vnder *Moses* and vnder *Christ*, what ever difference there be in other matters, yet in this

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they are in one, and the same condition, that as there reverence was required vnto Moses, so now obedience is required vnto Christ. It was to no purpose for the Iewes to plead they were Moses disciples, the peculiar people of God, chosen of him, graced by him with so many favours, if yet in the meane time they hardened their heartes, and would not heare Gods voice; but provoked him by their Idolatries, murmurings, & other disobediences, tempted him through Insidelirie, and despised his word, and marvellous wonders wrought among them. In this case no priuiledge could helpe them, they shall surely smart for their disobedience, and if God may bee believed vpon his oath they haue displeased him so much, that they shal never enter into his rest. The verie same thing the Apostle applies vnto Christians, they are the Church of Christ, members of the bodie of Christ, partakers of his benefits, and graces, but it is vpon this condition that they shew themselues faithfull in the obedience of the gospell of Christ, [*His house we are (saith the Apostle, ver. 6.) if we hold fast the confidence of reioycing of the hope firme vnto the end*] perseverance and faithfulness is that which makes men true members of the Church of Christ, whether Iewish, or Christian: If the Iewes be vnbelieving and rebellious, they come shorte of the land of Canaan in the type and substance too; If the Christians be like them in their sin, their punishment is the same, & they are excluded also from the heavenly rest of the people of God. Wherefore the Apostle in the next Chapter presseth this exhortation vehemently. That these Hebrews to whom hee writes should carefullie looke to themselues, that they were not as their Fathers of old, vnfaithfull and disobedient in their profession thereof, lest they become also like to their Fathers deprived of all benefit from promise in Christ. *Take heede therefore Brethren (saith he) that there be not, &c.* This is the occasion.

The parts of the words are two.

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2 *A Remedy*, to prevent Apostasie, that is expressed, *ver.*
mutuall exhortation to constancie in Godlinesse.

2 *A Remedy*, to prevent Apostasie, that is expiency, and
mutuall exhortation to constancie in Godlinesse.

You have the words and the plaine meaning : I come to
some instructions for our practise; the first is this. That,
in the *case of Apostasie from Religion.*

Infidelity is the cause of Apostasy from Religion.

Infidelity is the cause of Apostasy from Religion.
Infidelity is that which keeps men from entering into the Church of God, and it is that which throws them out again when they are entered. The fewest to whom the Apostle writes, some of them had refuted the Gospel, and put it from them by unbelief, others had embraced it, whom the Apostle

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Apostle

Apostle here calls brethren, and before, *ver. 1. Holy brethren partakers of the heavenly calling* in charitie, so styling them, who in visible profession had received and followed the doctrine of the gospel. These the Apostle exhorts to sinceritie and faithfulness, warning them to take heede, that there be not a Canker at the roote, that would in time destroy the whole tree with his fruits, namely, an vnbelieying heart that would in time destroy the whole tree with his fruits, that would in time make them Apostataes from the religion of Christ, which for the present they professed.

The doctrine then is plainly afforded by the text; wee shall endeavour to make it plaine vnto you, 1. by expounding the tearmes of it. 2. by shewing the reason why one followes of another.

1 By Apostasie [*ἀποστασία*] for the worde is meanta departing or going away from that which we formerly stood to, and followed: for the matter, we vnderstand hereby in short, the forsaking of true religion in the doctrine of it, or in the practise: for it must be noted that men become backsliders from religion two waies.

1 By leaving the truth of doctrine and giving heede to lies, contrarie to what is revealed in the word: when men fall into Atheisme, and make a jest of religion: or runne to Iudaisme from the Gospel to the Law; a point, wherein the Hebrewes were apt to be seduced by false teachers zealous of the Law, or when men slip into any Heresie overthrowing the faith, or those that cannot relish the water of life, but drinke deepe of the wine of fornication the impoysoned doctrine of *Antichrist*, such forsake the fellowship of the Saints, goe from God and his Church, leape out of the Arke into perdition.

2 By leaving the practise of religion, and godlines, when men profess their assent vnto the truth of the Articles of Faith, and so retaine the forme of godlinesse, but denie the power of it, being disobedient and wicked in their liues, when

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when men keepe their faith and haue lost their conscience; They could sometimes haue saide and haue done too, but now they can talke, heare & study about religion: But while their eares, tongues, and braines are busied, their hearts and their hands are idle. Both these are Apostates from God equally & alike, there is not the dust of the ballance to boot betwene the worth of a true belieuer, and a false belieuer if both be wicked liuers. An honest Infidell will hold weight with a wicked Christian. And a sober Papist is as good as a drunken Protestant; nay better, Inasmuch as it is better to glorifie God what way soeuer though in a false faith, then to dishonour his holy name wherewith we are called by an vnholly conversation, yea so foule a corruption of so holy a profession must needs much more shame his life, making it ten times more odious to others and damnable in it selfe. Wherefore Heresie in opinions and wickednesse in practise, both fall vnder this tearme of Apostasie from religion. And as he hath no religion at all that denieth the verity of diuine Doctrine, so, he hath no religion to any purpose that holds the truth, but denieth obedience to it. For what saith St James [*If any among you seemeth to be religious and bridlet h not his tongue, but deceiveth his owne heart this mans religion is in vaine.* Iam. 1. 26.] Hee reades vs a lesson in the next words, which men in his time, and likewise now will hardly learne, *viz.* That true religion stands in the practise of a holy life, as well as profession of diuine trueths [*pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visite the fatherlesse & widlow in their afflictions, and to keepe himselfe vnspotted of the world ver. 27.*] Wherefore they are Apostates from religion that relinquish either the doctrine or the practise of religion.

This of the first tearme, in the next place by Infidelity or vnbeliefe, we meane a withdrawing of our hearts from resting wholly vpon the trueth of Gods worde; nowe in the worde two things are proposed vnto vs to bee believed,

lieued.

1 All manner of doctrines or Articles of religion to bee firmly believed and maintained, against all Heresies and false doctrines.

2 All sorts of Commandements, threatnings, and promises tending to the direction of our practise, which we are to believe and embrace against all counsels, terrors, or allurementes whatsoever, tending to draw vs from obedience in our liues. Both these are the objects of true faith whereby men yeeld assent vnto all doctrines, commandements, threatnings, promises of God, not only as true and good in themselves, but as better and truer then any thing in the world that can be set against them, whence in all perswasion vnto error, in al temptation vnto vice, true faith resting it selfe on the word of God winnes the victorie, and overcomes the world: But where this is wanting, an easie way is left to all Heresies, and impietic, &c. Thus for the explication of the tearmes of this proposition: let vs see

2 The connexion of them together, how Apostasie springs from Infidelity: The reason is, because there is no other grace, that hath the proper office and power, to vphold a man in the constant embracing of all holy duties, and constant practise of all good workes, but only faith; and therefore where that is not, men must needs fall away from both.

That such is the force and vse of true faith, you shall see by considering the objects of it.

1 All diuine truths to be held and professed in matter of Religion, which are aboue our naturall and corrupt reason; and therefore vnlesse our vnderstanding bee by a true faith captivated vnto the obedience of Christ, that we can resigne vp our owne wits to be ruled by Gods wisdom, and rest our selues only vpon the true word of God, it is not possible, that ever we should finde sure footing, where, and in what certaine truth to rest our selues, but shall alwaies bee

as those Children spoken of, *Ephes. 4. 14.* of weake and vn-
settled mindes, easily perswaded to belieue any thing, being
like small barkes without sufficient balace, *καυσθησονται
ἐν τῷ πυρὶ ὡς κηλὶς* tossed vp and downe vpon the waues like a fea-
ther, and *ἀρρῶν τὴν ὁδὸν καὶ τὴν ἀντιπρῶτον* driven this way and that way with every winde of
ψευδοδιδασκαλίας false Doctrine, raised vp by our owne foolish fancie, or by
the device and craftinesse of men lying in wait to delude vs.

2 All commandements of God, touching our holy pra-
ctises, together with all the threatnings, if we doe not obey,
and promises if we doe. Now these things are partly con-
trary to our corrupt nature and vile affections, which can-
not subiect themselves to Gods law, partly they are be-
yond the reach and desire of our sensual and worldly minds
which see no great matter to be loved and feared, in what-
soever God threatneth or promiseth. Gods law is holy
but we are not so, Gods promises are spirituall, but we are
carnall, led by sensuality, placing our affections on things
that are in present view, and therefore naturally everie man
from the wombe is aduersē, and backward from doing
that which God commandeth, or believing what he promi-
seth or threatneth. Now then what can uphold a man in
his obedience to Gods law, and dependance vpon Gods
promises? It is only a true faith, which apprehending true-
ly the authority and high sovereignty which God hath in
commanding vs, and together therewith beholding the ex-
cellent holynesse and goodnesse of his commandements,
makes the heart stoope vnto obedience, be it neuer so irke-
some vnto it selfe. A gaine when faith apprehendes the im-
mutableness of God in his word, when it seeth the pretious-
nesse of the promises of mercie with their certaintie, when
it seeth the terribleness of its threatnes together with the vn-
avoidable accomplishment of them vpon obstinate men.
Here nowe the heart rests it selfe as on an anchor sure and
steadfast: it is filled with a constant feare to offend, because
it knowes punishment is not to be escaped, it is filled with

continual joye in its obedience, because it abides assured of the reward. But where this support of faith is wanting, all obedience presently falls to pieces, then if God command or forbid vs any thing, we beginne to take advise whether it be good to obey yea, or no; we fall to aske counsell of Satan, of our selues, of other men as bad as our selues. If they say no, there is our resolution too, God must looke him out other servants; we are not for his turne. If Satan tempt vs strongly, if our affections rage when they are crossed, if men frowne or fawne vpon vs, we are quickly turned out of the way, and our purposes of obedience, are all dashed in a moment. Let God and his Ministers threaten never so much, we then thinke within our selues that threatned men liue longest, & such angrie words breake no bones, let God promise neuer so faire, we can beginne to smile secretly in our hearts, and thinke they are but faire words, that make none but fooles faire. Indeepe if the worlde threaten or promise, wee thinke there is something in an arme of flesh that may doe vs hurt or good; but when faith is fled certaine close Atheisticall imaginations beginne to fasten vpon the minde concerning God and religion, as if religion were but a pretty politicke complement, & that God is one who will doe neither good nor euill; and that we haue no great cause to feare or trust him. We see then my brethren, how plaine a downfall there is from Infidelity to Apostasie, from God and all goodnes: when men want faith by the light whereof their blinde reason might be guided, by the power whereof their disordered hearts might bee kept in compasse, they straight runne madly into all wicked opinions and mischievous practises. Most true is that of Saint James, Chap. 1. ver. 8. [*A double minded man is vnstable in all his waies.*] A double minded man, that is, an vnbelieving person, whose faith and opinion stands vpon tearmes of indifferencie & probabilitie, hee is in *viramq; partem* on both sides, or betweene both, in neither; his opinions in matters of

of religion are variable according to seasons and occasions, he holda much of his religion by the copie of mens countenances, much of it by permission of his lusts with manifold reservations and provisos, that is shalbe lawfull for him in such and such cases to doe or believe otherwise then for the present hee doth, when men are thus of double mindes who resolve vpon both sides, and so resolve vpon neither, who cast about in their thoughts and say, I believe this but it may be 'tis otherwise, I doe this, but what if I do it not; what if I do the contrary: when mens mindes looke thus a squint on two things at once they must needs be vnsstable in their waies: If saving faith in the trueth of God doe not establish the heart in a full relyance vpon God only, it is impossible but that a man should be of a wauering and moueable temper, vnsstable in his opinions, vnsetled in his practises (*deuoculos*) like a man that standes vpon one legge, easily overturned, like a bowle on a smooth table, that's pushed aside with the least touch of a finger; whereas the true believer founded and stablished in the faith is one of *those living stones*, which *St. Peter* speaketh of, *1. Pet. 2. 5.* which are squared and surely placed vpon the foundation, there vpon resting vnmoueable.

Thus much for the opening of this point sufficiently for our vse, as that which needs practise more then prooffe. The vses I shall commend vnto you shalbe no other then those which are made already to our hand in the text.

The first vse shalbe for exhortation, that we be now admonished of this matter: what the Apostle speakes to these Hebrewes, the same I say vnto you, *Beloved, Take heed brethren lest there be in any of you an euill heart of unbelieve, in departing from the living God.* Be well aduised, looke well about you, it is a matter of greatest moment, here vpon depends your constancie in religion, and vpon that dependes your happynesse in heaven. My trust is this exhortation will not be sleighted by you, if you will a little consider seriously

Vs. 1.

of these motives, that may stirre you vp to this diligent caution. I will name but two things, which the Apostle also in this place giues vs notice of.

1. The easinesse to fall into this euill of vnbeliefe and Apostasie: the Apostle in this and the next chapter is very vehement, in admonishing the hebrews of this danger. And good reason, seeing it is a matter not easily heeded without good forewarning. Wee easilie deceiue our selues in this matter through the wickednesse and guile of our owne hearts, many times vainely imagining our hearts to be good and faithful, when indeede they be euill hearts of vnbeliefe. This is a peece of cunning which they are not to learne: viz. to beguile vs with counterfeit graces in steede of currant. But that which deceiues men chiefly in this businesse, is this; that because we liue in one common societie of the church, therefore wee dreame of a communitie of faith and salvation. What meane elsie those carelesse thoughts and speeches of many? I thanke God I haue a strong faith and haue had euer; I am a Christian, a Protestant baptized, and bred vp in the true faith of Christ Iesus, I frequent good exercises, I liue as most men doe, &c: whence they thinke this is sufficient, and that now there is no danger of miscarrying. Men take vp their religion as they doe fashions; what most men haue they must haue also; most men speake well of religion, great men countenance it; a religious King loues & defends it, and it is the fashion to be a Protestant, and therefore they will be so, lest they be singular: As vertues be not disliked when they grow common (which is seldome) men will seeme at least to loue them. My Brethren, wee abhorre Popery, and yet can be content to doe as Papists doe; viz. to take vp our religion vpon trust. If it be not so, whence then is the ignorance, the vngodlinesse of so many in our Churches; multitudes there be of men, who knowe not but that another religion may be as good as that which they professe, and for ought themselues or any body elsie can tell, be as ready

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ready to leaue as to keepe what they haue. Our aduersaries see this, and stick not to triumph at this our weaknesse; that wee may haue Churches full of people, but empty of sound Protestants: They will tell vs in their booke, that a great part that are on our sides, haue no other motives to hold them here, but only because they haue bin so borne and bred, and receiued their religion as they do their inheritance, by descent and custome of the Country; men, whom decrees of Parliament and feare of lawes keepe with vs rather then any certaine knowledge of the truth of our religion by the Scripture. It is a shame that wee are not able to confute such shamefull imputations. To say it is worse, with our aduersaries, whose chiefe policy to keepe simple soules within the pale of their Church is ignorance, and feare of the Inquisition; this may stop their mouthes, but it helps not vs, we may see and pittie the miserable estate of most, who if they be examined by a Minister touching their faith, will make him blush and blesse himselfe to see their ignorance. But if such fall into the hand of a Priest or Iesuite to try them a litle, they will soone streine at their religion. Is it not strange that they should be men that professe it, and that forwardly too sometimes, who yet are not able to maintaine it? How soone thinke you will such blasts as these be shaken, with every blast and torne vp out of our Church, when they haue taken no deeper roote in the faith; especially if temporall respects should meete together with Sophistical arguments, and turne them aside from the puritie of the Gospell. But these are not all that deceiue themselves; not onely ignorant persons, but those that haue knowledge and liue vngodly, runne into the same errors, and danger, men that are lyars, swearers, adulterers, oppressors, voluptuous persons, yea scoffers at true piety will be accounted men that loue religion, and such as will stand to defend it if neede be. But they are not aware that there is in them an euill heart that wil deceiue them: may we thinke that such

men whose end is to liue loofely will much deliberate in what religion to doe it? vn lesse they thinke the name of a Protestant will be enough to saue a libertine, what auailles it whether they beleue well or ill, when they are resolu'd to liue wickedly. Such ignorant and vicious persons as these (and these take vp a great parte of our Companies) such as these they be that runne vpon religion at all adventures taking that which is next before the, neuer labouring after that faith & knowledg which should be able to endure the tryall. So easie a matter is it for me that liue in a true Church to fall into the errors of the Iewes *Luk. 5. 8. (wee haue Abraham to our father)* and therefore we must needs doe well, and God must euen doe miracles, and make men of stones if any be saued but they; so now wee liue in a reformed Church, purged with doctrine and discipline, blest with religious Princes, with faithfull Ministers, with peace in the dayes of others troubles, and with miraculous deliuerances: And be these priuiledges enough to winne our loue to religion, and our constancy in the defending of it? Yes truly they be, if well vsed, and let them perith for euer that would seeke to rob vs of so great blessings by any malicious forces or crafts.

But my Brethren, externall priuiledges must not deceiue vs, wee must looke euery one to himselfe that we be not vnreformed persons in a reformed Church, ignorant in so great light of doctrine, disordered vnder goodnes of discipline, men disobedient to Prince and Priest, luxurious in our peace, secure and vnthankfull after our deliuerances. If wee be so, all is not well with vs, whatsoeuer we may boast and imagine: there is a roote of bitterness within our vnbeleiuing hearts, which in time will spring vp into the gall and wormewood of Apostasy from God and his Gospell.

This is the first motiue.

The 2 motiue to make vs heedfull, is the great euill and danger of Apostasy and infidelity. An vnbeleiuing heart is

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an euill heart, a sintull and wicked heart, a heart vn teachable and vnttractable, the word works not on it, mercy cannot perswade it, iudgements cannot breake it, all meanes of fauour are in vaine applyed to make it yeeld: as we haue a sufficient example of the Iewes alleadged in this Chapter, with whom Gods word, and great works preuayled nothing, because of their vnbeleife. Thus it is euill in it selfe, it is euill also in its effects, because it breeds a forsaking of God, the very worst of all euills in the world which the Apostol amplifies calling it *Apostasy, a departing frō the liuing God*. This attribute compriseth all the rest, & more to vs the all the rest, not only what God is in himselfe, but what he is vnto the creatures, namely the author of their life & being, & so the fountain of their happynesse and welfare. He therefore that forsakes God, leaues the wellspring of liuing waters to drinke puddle out of a broken Cisterns, he leaues the Sunne to warme himselfe at a candle, and departs from life, to goe into death: God is truth and light, and they that goe from him runne into darkenesse and error, in him only is peace and happinesse, without him there's nothing but woe and misery: [*They forsake their owne mercy, that trust in lying vanities*] *Isaiah. 3. 2.* being taught by his owne experience; he that flies away from Gods presence to goe to Thariss, thinking there to be in safety he shalbe deceiued in his expectation, the windes will not blow fauorably vpon such a runagate, the seas will not brooke the shippe that beares him, safety he finds none, but whē we least looked for it in the belly of a fish, and that neither vntil he had returned vnto God, whom he had forsaken, by prayer and promise of obedience. Men and Angels and all creatures are but lying vanities deceiuing the hope of them that seeke vnto them for helpe, when their ayde is only sought after and God forsaken, they then leade vs into sinne and misery, and there leaue vs. Wherefore miserable is the case of Apostates, who turne their backs to religion and sancti-

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ry of life, in as much as these things cannot be left, but God must be forsaken too. There is indeede an imagination amongst them, that God will be a friend vnto them in all religions, and in all practises whatsoeuer. But this is but a Turkish dreame; No, he that departs from faith and obedience, departs also from the liuing God. And whosoever so forsakes God, let him also be sure God will forsake him, then which no greater miserie can betide a creature.

You see, *Beloued*, what iust cause we haue to enforce this exhortation vpon our selues. *Take heede &c.* It is easie yett most dangerous to be deceiued herein, wherefore now be-thinke your selues, try your hearts in an vnpartiall examination of them, whether they be sound in the faith yea, or no; now that yee may not wander in this search, fasten your meditations vpon these two particulars. 1. Looke to thy knowledge, see vpon what grounds thy faith in God and profession in religion is built. Stands thy faith in the wisdom of men, & beleuest thou because of their saying? is it founded vpon the custome of the countrie, & of thine owne education, vpon the authoritie of lawes and good liking of men that establisth and maintaine the religion thou professest? if this be the ground worke of thy faith, thou buildest vpon the sand. Hast thou no sound knowledge of religion thy selfe? Art thou vnable to iustifie thy faith by the Scriptures? Is not thy conscience convinced by sure prooffe that the religion which thou professest is the very truth of God? If so, know then for a certaine that there is an euill heart within thee, that will betray thee to Apostasie in the time of trouble. Shall a man thinke thou wilt stand to that which thou knowest not thoroughly: when arguments, threatnings, persuations, and faire promises shall assault thee? Will such sleight imaginations as these endure the stake when all that thou canst say for thy selfe is, I thinke so, men say so, I haue beene taught so, by such and such Ministers, other men are of that opinion, I neuer heard to the contrarie? And wil such
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flender, and ill grounded conceits as these in matter of religion vphold thy heart in a constant resolution to stand for the maintenance of the faith? will these arme thee with courage against the point of the sword, the heate of the fire, the teeth of the beast, the force of torments, losse of friends, of country, of life for Christs sake? Be assured that if thy religion rest vpon such prepps as these, that it will fall vpon the dust, when peace, credit, and other temporall respects which are now the maine vnderfeters of it, shalbe remoued, and the whole weight of it shall leane vpon such a broken reede.

2^d Lookoe to thy practice, whereby thou shalt best discover what thy heart is. Is the practice of thy religion entire, faire, vniuersal, equally respecting all the commandments, so that thou studiest to thy power to walke before God in vprightnesse, and to please him in all things? Art thou the same man in priuate, that thou art in publike, in thy closet and in thy parlour, in the Church, and in the market, in thy life and in the pulpit? Is thy carriage even and smooth, doe thy holines towards God, thy righteousnesse towards men, thy sobrietie towards thy selfe keepe pace together, & goe hand in hand? Art thou a faithfull Minister, a iust Magistrate, an honest tradesman as well as thou pretendest to be a Christian? If thou canst say yea, & that truly, there's hope of such a one, that what ever may befall him, he will not start back nor deale vnfaithfully in the covenant he hath made with God, but that his faithfulnessse and vprightnesse shal preserue him from backsliding. But, Beloued, if ye serue God with reservations and secret dispensations, picking and choosng according as it fits your owne humours, doing this thing, disobeyng that; If ye trust God in some promises, mistrust him in others, feare him in some threatnings, despise him in others, then know, all is not well within; for there is within an evill heart of vnbeleife, and religion will gaine but litle credit, by your cōstācie in the professing of it.

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He that shuffles and cutts and choakes his conscience by shifts of wit, stifles in him the good motions of grace, nourisheth in him some wicked affection or other, and liues in the practice of some secret abomination: He that can stum-
ble at a straw, and leape ouer a block, straine at a ceremony and neglect the substance of righteousnesse, and iudgment, and the feare of God, he that is forward in such maters as gaine applause, making the shew of his religion his reputation, but in the meane time where there's no notice taken of him, he liues loosely, intemperatly, and vnconscionably: Let not such a one deceiue himselfe, it is certaine his heart is naught and vnfaithfull, and when God & his religion haue most neede of him such a false friend will faile them both. He that hath already denied the power of Godlinesse, will it be any wonder if afterwards he deny the forme of it? one sinne liued in without repentance is enough to pull a man to hell, and will it not be enough to poperie, or any other heresie? He that will not leaue his sin for his religious sake, will easily be perswaded to leaue his religion for his sinnes sake; he that will not at Gods commande or intreaty be brought in any hand to put to death the body of sinne, to relinquish any of his pleasing and profitable lusts, & lewd practices, is this man in case to put to death himselfe in the defence of Gods truth, for loue thereof to forsake the world and himselfe too, to part with so much that could not part with so little? He that is already a secret enemy to religion and devotion, will in time proue an open persecutor of both. He that can despise and in heart deride a protestant minister is in faire forwardnesse to like well of a Popish Priest. In a word he that hath bid farewell to pietie to day, it is an euen lay but he may bee driuen to take leaue of his religion to morrow. When once the conscience can swallow downe wicked practises, it will soone digest wicked opinions: when once the ship leakes, the lading is in danger both to sinke or swimme together, neither is it possible that a pure
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faith can be preserved in an impure conscience.

Now (my Brethren) let every one of vs cause our hearts to passe vnder this triall & censure, and so we shall see what we haue to trust to, & what religion hath to trust to vs. Let vs goe vpon sure grounds, care we that our knowledge of religion be distinct, and certaine, that our practice of it bee sincere, free frō Hypocrisie, & so we shal giue good prooofe of our faithfulness for the present, and our perseverance for the time to come. Be not slack to goe about this search, and be sure to doe it thoroughly, delaies are dangerous when the the disease is mortall, and to cure by halfe is not to cure at al. Secret infidelity is like hereditary diseases, or like bruises taken in youth if they be not looked to in time, & thoroughly cured they will certainly kill at last.

A gangrene kills when it gets to the heart, and what will that doe that is bred in the heart? Inward diseases are ever dangerous; but when they haue seized vpon the heart the fountaine of life they proue deadly.

Take then heed of an evill heart poysoned with vnbeliefe; and as you loue the credit of religion, the favour of God, the happinesse of your soules, looke to it betimes to purge forth of you such a venemous humour.

And now for an Antidore against this infection hearken in the next place to the second vse.

The second vse is of direction vnto a remedie against vnbeliefe, and Apostasie, doe that which the Apostle here exhorts you to [*Exhort one another daily, while it is called to day.*] *Use. 2.*

FINIS.

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EXOD.



EXOD. 34. 23. 24.

- 23 *Thrice in the yeare shall all your men Children appeare before the Lord God, the God of Israel.*
- 24 *For I will cast out the Nations before thee, and inlarge thy borders: neither shall any man desire thy land, when thou shalt goe up to appeare before the Lord thy God thrice in the yeere.*



IN these words we haue two parts to be obserued. 1. A Precept. 2. A Promise. The precept is a Leviticall injunction touching certaine times of Solemne worshippe to be performed to God by the Israelitish nation, in the 23. vs. More distinctly we haue in it three circumstances to be obserued.

1 The time when this service was to be performed, that was [*thrice in the yeare*] namely at 3. very solemne Feasts, which were these.

1 The Feast of the Passcouer or vneleavened bread, because during the Feast for seven dayes they might haue no leavened bread in all their dwellings. This Feast the whole Nation was to keepe at the Tabernacle where euer it should be set vp: where after they had Sacrificed the Pas-

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chall Lambe in the Evening, they were to returne on the morrow to their habitations as it is *Deut. 16. 7.* This Feast was kept on the 4th day of the first moneth, in memory of their deliverance out of *Ægypt*, & in *Ægypt* from the slaying Angell, and in type of Christ *that saves vs from the wrath to come.*

2 The Feast of Pentecost, or of weekes, which was kept seuen compleat weekes after the Passeouer; or beginning the accompt at ripe Haruest when they put the sickle to the Corne; fiftie dayes after they were to appeare before God with an oblation of the first fruits, as it is *Deut. 16. 9. Lev. 23. 15. &c.* This Feast was kept in memory of the Law giuen at Mount Sinai, fifty daies after the departure of the Children of Israel out of *Ægypt*.

3 The Feast of the Tabernacles, kept on the fifteenth day of the seaventh Moneth, for seuen dayes together after the gathering in of Haruest and Vintage, *Lev. 23. 33. &c.* At which time the Children of Israel that were Israelites borne were to dwell in Bootheries made of the boughes of thicke and broad leaved trees, leaving their houses; In memory that they dwelt in Tents or Bootheries for many yeares in the wilderness, as it is *verse 42. 43.* of that place. These were the three solemne Feasts of the yeare wherein all the Males were to appeare before the Lord, as we haue this precept explained by another precept, *Deut. 16. 16. Exod. 23. 14. &c.* wherein these Feasts are mentioned. This is the first Circumstance of the time.

2 The second is the persons that were at those times to performe this worship vnto God: these are [*All your men Children*] all the Males among the Israelites.

3 The third Circumstance is, the person before whom they were to make their appearance, that is God who is here called the [*Lord Iehouah*] and the [*God of Israel*], both titles implying that he had iust authority to commande the Israelites such solemne Services, both in regard of his absolute

lute Sovereignty over all, and also of his gracious mercy towards them his People.

Now vnder this Circumstance of the person is implied the Place, where they should appeare, which was in that place which God should choose, wherein to reare vp the Tabernacle, or Sanctuary, for his solemne and standing worship. This was first at Shiloh, & after that was destroyed, at Ierusalem, in the Temple built by Solomon; which place God chose to put his name there, that is to establish his worship and to manifest his Glorious presence in speciall manner in that place. In which respect those that appeared in those places dedicated to Gods worship, are sayd to appeare before God himselfe, there present to require and reward their faithfull Services.

This then is the precept, that at three Solemne Feastes in the yeere, the Passeover, Pentecost and Tabernacles all the males of the Israelitish Nation, should repaire vnto the chiefe place of Gods Publike worship, there to offer Sacrifice and performe such Services as were required of them.

Next followes *verse. 24.*

2 The *Promise* which is added to the Precept by way of prevention, to take away such an objection as the People might make against the equitie and Reasonableness of the afore named Precept; God had commanded threetimes in a yeere all should come vp to the Tabernacle or Temple. What will become of vs then might the people say? If all the men must go vp & leaue their Houses, who shal in their absence defend their Wiues, Childrē, Goods, Cattle, &c. frō spoile? we dwell amidst Enemies round about vs, the Ammonites, Moabites, Syrians, Phenicians, Philistines, Amalekites, Edomites &c. who beare vs mortall hatred for the wrong they thinke wee haue done them invading their Territories; these wilbe mindfull of vs, they haue Policie enough to know the Custome of our Country, and they will be malicious enough, to watch their best opportunitie to doe

doe vs mischief; the season fit for Invasion being the Harvest time. If the Land be thus as is wete dispeopled thrice in the yeare they will soone provide Forces in a readines to set vpon vs, and when men are absent, wals & women are but weake defences, when al shal be at Ierusalem an hundred or moe miles from home and that for many dayes in their going and comming and abode there, what a spoile may there be committed vpon the borders in the meane time? Wherefore this Service of God cannot be performed but with apparent perill to the whole State.

This is the obiection which the Israelits might make both in the wildernes, and after that from time to time when they dwelt in the promised Land.

By way of answer vnto this doubt, God promisseth that no Danger should befall them for observing of this commandement in this particular. Our Enemies will invade our Country if we doe it say they: nay, saith God, not so. I will so order matters that they shall doe you no hurt [*neither shall any desire thy Land when thou shalt go vp thrice in a yeere to appeare before the Lord thy God*] wherein God promisseth that by an especiall providence he would so governe the Hearts of the Enemies of his People, that they should not as much as intend them any mischief when they went about the Service of God. Though a faire opportunity should bee offered them, yet they should haue no Heart or desire to meddle with their Countrey. But because they might yet cast a farther doubt and bee scarce willing to take God vpon his word in a matter so vnlikely; therefore God to put them out of all feare strengthens this his promise by two other promises which should soone be effectually performed; that by seeing his truth in the one, they may learne to trust to his truth in the other. These promises are 1. That God would driue out the inhabitants of the land of Canaan, and giue them a dwelling there, [*for I will cast out the Nations before thee:*] therefore hee coulde easilie keepe out their

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enemies from reentring that could throw them out, when they were in possession.

2 That he would make their territories larger from time to time [*and I will enlarge thy Coasts*] their Territories assigned them should grow wider, not narrower; and they should gaine vpon their enemies, who were more like to winne vpon them. Now then hee that could giue them a Countrey when they had none, but wandered in the wilderness without house or home; he that could enlarge their borders when at the first they were but little (according as experience anone after this time did proue to be most true:) he also could preferue them from loosing any thing they had, especially when they hazarded it for his owne service sake.

This is the plaine resolution of this scripture. From hence now wee haue two instructions for our practice here to be learned. The first is,

That no man shalbe a loser by his obedience to God. The inference is plaine. The Israelits might pleade that they could not obey this commaundement, because of apparent inconveniencies that woulde follow therevpon: God remoues this scruple by promising that no such danger should happen on them as they imagined; if they would obey they should not be damaged by it. Now forasmuch as the like obiections are made by vnbelieuers against every part of Gods Service, to the end to shifte off from themselves a necessity so Obedience; and also because God deales a like at all times towards his Faithfull Servants; which setting aside all by-respects readily obey his will, By the rule of Proportion, from this particular we deduce this Generall.

That God suffers not men to sustaine hurt and losse in regard of their Obedient Performance of such things as he commaunds them. The second is this.

Experience of the Trueth in some of Gods Promises, should confirme our faith in the beliefe of others.

The deduction is also manifest, God commands the Isra-

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elites to belieue that hee will over-rule the hearts of their enemies, and keepe them from annoying of their countrey when they are busied about Gods worship: why? because he would cast out their enemies, because hee would enlarge the bounds of their countrey after their enioying it: now these promises they shoulde see manifestly accomplished shortlie after they came into the land of Canaan; for now they were in the wildernesse when this precept was given them, and therefore they had reason to belieue that God would bee as good as his word in this promise for their defence, as he would be for their Plantation in that countrey. Hence the point is,

Triall in one thing, should cause trust in God for all other matters. Of these in order.

1 *That none shalbe a looser by his obedience to God.* For confirmation of this trueth obserue these reasons.

R. 1 The first reason is drawne from the trueth and faithfulness of God in as manie promises as hee hath made in the Scriptures, setting forth his abundant rewarde of faithfull obedience. It were an endlesse thing to name vnto you all, or the most of these promises. I shall therefore only direct you to the serious meditation vpon these Scriptures, *Dent.* 28. *Psal.* 37, and 128. wherein whatsoeuer is good for the Soule, the Body, the Estate, the Name, the Posteritie of Man, all is promised to them that feare God and obey his commaundements; in all which God is faithfull and true to performe what hee promiseth, if we be carefull to obey.

R. 2 The second is from his Mercie and Bountie, wherein he is rich vnto all, and aboue all to such as feare and obey him. By which meanes God provides as for his owne glorie, so for our singular inconragement in his seruice. He will not haue his seruants to complaine that they serue a hard Master; one that doth ill prouide for the aduancement and welfare of his seruants: that his seruice is of much hazard, full of trouble, molestation, and painefulnesse, but of little

profit

profit and comfort. This were a dishonour to God: wherefore God will make it appeare that he commaundes not o-
ver vs for our hurt, nor makes vse of our seruice without a
bountifull rewarde for our labour. If hee bid vs doe any
thing 'tis that we maie gaine by it, as well as himselfe. His
glorie and our happinesse go both together: nay, was there
euer anie who sought to glorifie God by his obedience, but
God made him happie in the reward of it?

R. 3. Thirdly, the last shalbe frō the power of God, where-
by he is able to giue euerie good thing to his seruants; and
to shield them from all euill things. Whatsoever is worth
the hauing, that God hath in his gift as Soueraigne Lord to
distribute all the goodnesse which is in himselfe or in
his Creatures, where and in what manner hee himselfe plea-
seth. Againe, he hath vnder his commande the forces of all
Creatures in Heauen and in Earth, which hee ruleth as he
pleaseth to his owne purposes. He can at ease frustrate the
harmefull intentions, and noisome qualities of the worst of
them. Hee can at anie time turne their malice into mercie,
yea he is able to bring forth glorie to himselfe, and profit to
his seruants not onlie against, but even out of their mischie-
vous designements. This shall suffice for prooffe of this
point, which needes not so much confirmation to conuince
vs of the trueth of it, as perswasion to moue vs to applie it
to our practice. I will therefore come to the application
of it after I haue in few wordes cleared a doubt or twaine,
the solution whereof will farther illustrate the point it selfe:

Q. 1 The first question is, *what is to bee thought of those
that suffer euill for the service of God?* We see it is generallie
the condition and lot of the godly to haue verie hard mea-
sure in this world, if any sit downe by the losse 'tis common-
lie they. *He that refraineth himselfe from euill maketh him-
selfe a prey;* it was and wil be true to the worlds end: a god-
lie man is a faire marke wherevpon to discharge all the ma-
lice and mischiefe of the world; and a goodly pleasant ma-

ter it is to the Diuell, and men to heape all iniuries that may be vpon the head of so hateful a person as is in their accept a faithfull seruant of God: how then is it true that Gods seruice brings vs no dammage? I answere brieflie to this doubt three things.

A. 1 That such evils as befall the good and godly come vpon them ordinarily, not for their diligence, but negligence in the seruice of God. Even they haue their faults, their pride, their securitie, their vnbeliefe, their profanenesse in Gods worship, their covetousnes; and then no marvell if they smart for it. God lets loose the tongues of railers to scourge their name; he vnbindes the hands of robbers to spoile their goods; he giues Sathan libertie to afflict their soules; he himselfe hides his face from them, and in wofull plight they are, till in their affliction they turne to the Lord, and repent of their euill doings. Seruants when they grow lazie, and wicked neede Correction more then Protection; and so it is betweene God and vs; if once we grow vnfaithful he hath a hand to smite vs, as wel as to defend vs, a rod as wel as a crooke, and he loues vs so wel that hee will not spare our iniquities, but lay it on vs, *that being chastened by him we might not be condemned with the world.* 1. Cor. 11. 32.

2 God doth dispose of things thus in great wisdom when euen the best fare many times worst, to try the soundnes of their zeale, their faith, their patience, &c. God will know whether men that professe much loue of him will be contented to beare a little losse for his sake, or whether they will forsake his seruice, when peace, wealth, and credit in the world forsake them. God will also make the world know that he hath seruants in the world which serue him not for ful baggs, high titles, large possessions, wellfurnished tables, bodily ease and *a whole skinne.* (As Sathan most maliciouslie accused holy *Iob. ch. 1.*) but men that serue him out of loue & faithfulness, men that are resolu'd to follow him through

pover-

povertie, disgrace, hunger, nakednesse and perills, yea to open their breasts to the sword of the murderers and to give their bodies to the flames, if it may bee to doe God or his gospell credit. Now other things be but small losses, my brethren, when God and his grace in vs gaines so much honour.

3 Those losses which at anie time happen for Gods cause, God at another time makes them good: they are not losses so much as layings out, which after a patient for bearing a while come home with interest, commoely in the same kind, or which is much better with abundance of grace here, & a greater weight of glorie in the life to come. This is plaine in that answere our Saviour makes to his Disciples, *Math. 19. 28. 29.* [*Behold, saith Peter in the name of all the rest, wee have forsaken all and followed thee; what therefore shall wee have?* ver. 27.] Christ answeres, neither they nor any others should be loo'sers by him, he would make them also sufficient amends, whosoever should sustaine damage and trouble for his sake, [*verily I say unto you (saith Christ) that when the sonne of man shall sit on the Throne of his maiestie, ye which follow me in the regeneration, shall sit also vpon twelve Thrones and iudge the twelve Tribes of Israel.*] A large recompence if wee marke it. Of those Fisher-men that had forsaken a few Boats, and Nets, and Cabbins, and other such meane tackling of their trade and liuelyhood, to attend vpon Christ in his busines, to be thus rewarded with Thrones and Iudgement-Seats, when Christ shall come in his glorie. But this is the disciples priviledge; there followes a promise for al other. [*And whosoever shall forsake houses, or brethren, or Sisters, or father or mother, or wife or children, or lands, for my names sake and the gospell, he shall receive a hundred fold more, now at this present; houses, and brethren, and sisters, and Mothers, and children, & lands with persecution (marke that condition) with persecution: and in the world to come shall inherit everlasting life.* *Mark. 10. 20.*] Lo then nothing is lost, that

is neglected for Gods cause: he wilbe accomptable to satisfie for all troubles, losses, inconveniences whatsoever that we shall runne into by reason of our faithful obedience vnto his commandements. Thus much of the first question; the next is,

Q. 2 Whether we may neglect the busines of our calling to imploy our selues in the service of God?

For if Gods seruice bee so full of gaine and advantage it seemes we haue a faire warrant to leaue much of the imployments of our severall vocations, that so we might spend the more time in Gods service.

A. Whereto I answer, that we may not doe so, because that our generall callings to be Christians, and our particular callings in a civill life doe not crosse one another, but are subordinate and serviceable one to another.

Religion is that which brings a blessing vpon our civill vocation, and this againe is the ordinarie meanes of obtaining that blessing. Our civil vocation is the standing where in we are to shew forth the fruits of our Religion and to approve our selues to be indeed good Christians, by being honest Tradersmen, iust Magistrates, painefull Ministers, &c. so that we may not neglect one calling for another, seeing God is served & glorified by our faithful discharge of both alike, and therefore *we must abide*, as the *Apostle* commaundes vs, *1. Cor. 7. 30.* *in that vocation wherein we are called*, not shifting from one to another, not taking libertie to be idle in our particular lawfull imployments, that so wee may be diligent in Gods seruice. Wherefore they are iustlie to be reprov'd not onelie, who vterlie forsake all imployments of this life, to the end they may wholie consecrate themselves to spiritual devotion, but such also who though they forsake not vterlie, yet neglect more then is fit, their civill vocations. It is either waie a misguided zeale either to withdraw ones selfe from humane society, neglecting al service to our neighbours vnder a pretence of more devout seruice to God, as Popish Vota-

Votaries vse to doe, or as manie doe, who grow carelesse of their lawfull affaires, whiles they busie themselves about exercises of religion. I would be loath to discourage anie man for his forwardnes in matters of religion; I know well wee shall finde everie where ten monstroulie prophane, to one indiscreetlie zealous: yea a hundred that neglect Gods service to follow their owne busines, for one that doth otherwise. Yet giue me leaue to tell you that there is a fault among some in the world, who suffer dammage not so much by Gods service, as by their owne indiscretion, whiles by vnnecessarie iournies, conferences, entertainements, and such like occasions touching matters of religion, they put al their necessarie businesse out of order. If such men suffer decaye in their estates, they must blame themselves. Religion is not in the fault, which where it is truelie taught teacheth man prudence, how to order his estate with iudgement. The want whereof giues occasion to most to imagine that the greatest part of such mens religion lies in their eares, because they loue to heare much but not to doe. This fault should be amended where it is to be found, to the end that religion be not scandalized as a profession that doth impoverish men. I confesse it is not an easie matter to giue generall rules that may besit all callings and conditions of life, to proportion out the times of Gods service, and our owne employments, yet these things I shall commend to your considerations.

¶ That in parting our time betweene religious and civill affaires, we shall doe best to follow Gods owne directions, who hath allotted a larger proportion to our owne temporall busineses then to his spirituall service; sixe daies for those; one day for this. Not but that he must haue the glorie of some time, and all the busineses of everie daie; but on the seaventh day he requires we should more immediatlie and wholly intende his service. And know this for a truth, that could reason or Gods commande perswade people to
harken

harken to Gods counsell, diligentlie and seriouslie to attend all the duties of Gods worship vpon the Lords daie, they should finde a larger increase of grace and better successe in their affaires by that one meanes wel vsed, then now by manie neglected.

2 You may obserue a diuersitie in mens callings: some afford more leasure, some lesse. Where more may be spared it cannot be better bestowed then vpon God to glorifie him, and vpon a mans owne soule to fruite it; but where lesse may be spared, something yet may be set apart for religion. This is certaine, there is no calling of neuer so busie employment, but enough time may be spared for some good duties without hindering the world, and enough preserved for the world without robbing of God, were we wise to doe well, did not covetousnes, voluptuousnes and other vilde affections befoole vs, and make vs vnthankfull vnthrifs of this shortnesse of life and grace, were our eies cleared vp, that we could looke perfectlie into the end of all things, reason and religion would teach vs, that much of our time would bee spent better then it is. Surelie men will say hereafter how much better had it beene, had I spent such an howre in praier which I wasted in idlenes; such a night in examining my heart vpon my bed, and watering my couch with my teares of repentance, which I spent in revelling, gaming, and other vngodlie practises; how much better had it beene if I had gone to the house of God, when at such a time I went about needlesse disports; that such a daie had beene spent in praier and fasting, which was passed awaie in complements of visitation, and entertainements. But we trifle awaie our time, and then complaine we want time for Gods service; and service of our callings. The service of our lusts haue eaten vp that which was to be bestowed vpon God, and the remainder the world must haue that. Wherefore let vs learne wisdom, and seeing wee can almost at any time finde an houre, halfe a daie, a whole daie, or more to spare from our busi-

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businesses for by matters. Let vs doe as much for God as we will doe for the world, and besides the seauenth day which is his owne let vs giue him somewhat of the sixe other, an houre to heare a Sermon as well as twaine to our selues to sit idelle of ill imployed; to spend halfe an houre in praier, reading, meditation, as well as thrce houres at a feast; to spare once a quarter a daie for the humiliation of thy soule in fasting praier and examination of thy sinnefull hart as well as thou sparest odde daies enough for thy pleasure. This were wisdom and spirituall thriftines; and be hold on it, my brethren, that things being thus ordered with moderation and godlie discretion, much time will be gained for Gods seruice without crossing or hindering of our worldlie affaires. Thus much of these questions; now let vs come to make some application of the point to our practise.

The first is for the discouerie and reproofe of those euill thoughts and practises of men who iudge the seruice of God to be an vnprofitable and dangerous imploiment. Manie there are that thinke as that euill & sloathfull seruant spake, *Mat. 25. 24.* [*Master I knew thou wast a hard man*] in most mens estimation God is a hard Master, that lookes for much labour and paies but small wages. This corrupt opinion of God & his worship is an old festered sore in the heart of man deepe lie settled in his thoughts, and not seldome blistering out vpon his tongue. [*Your words haue beene stout against me*] saith the Lord to the Jewes in Malachie his time. *Mal. 2. 13. 14.* [and wherein had they spoken stubbornlie against him? *Te haue said* (saith God) *it is in vaine to serue God, & what profit is it that we haue kept his commandements and walked humbly before the Lord of Hosts. Therefore wee count thee proude blessed, even they that worke wickednesse are set up; and they that tempt God yea they are deliuered.*] See the rancor of a corrupt heart venting it selfe in fowle accusations against God and his goodnes, as if he were one that

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had no respect at all to his faithfull Servants, but one that favoured his Foes more then his friends. Such is still the sottish iudgment of the world, that it is a thankeles office to obey God almighty: they count no time so vnprofitably spent as that which is bestowed vpon his service, even the godlie in a fit of discontent are apt to thinke so. *David, Ps. 73. 13. [verily I haue cleansed my heart in vaine.] Baruch. Ier. 45. 3.* no course so vnlikely to thriue by, to liue happily or honorably in the world as that which God counsels them to: no men so despicable, and miserable as those who desire to be what they are named, Christians. Mens practises easilie discover, that in their hearts they are come to desperate resolutions, as that impious fellow, *2. King. 6. 33. [Should I attend on God any longer:]* perswade men all that you can to a religious observation of reading the word, instructing their servants and children as is to bee done in Christian families; shew them Gods commaundements, tell them of his promises that in doing these things God will blesse both soule and body, goods and good name: and marke their answers. Alas they are but poore men, it is one day in a weeke losse to them, they must worke, or else wife and children wilbe ill provided for: they cannot liue by hearing of sermons; religion will not buy food or raiment, they haue their hands full of businesse, and should they spend halfe an houre in a morning and so much at evening for prayer and devotion, all would runne to wracke, their worke would want their servants, and their servants would want their sleepe; they haue some speciall busines which cannot bee compassed in the weeke, wherefore they must make bolde with God, and borrow what they neuer meane to pay, it must and shalbe done on the Lordes day, else they should wrong themselues and set all out of square. Tell men that God abhorres falshood, that a little with equitie is better then bagges full of cosenage and deceit; they'le answere you, that is not the way to thriue, they wote well that plaine dealing

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dealing is a iewell and God likes well of it, but they do giue you to vnderstande that hee that vseth it shall die a begger. Wherefore they must lie and cosen, and doe as the world doth or els they are sure wealth wil come in but slowly. Perswade men to be mercifull to the poore, to feed the hungry, cloath the naked, helpe the decayed that their hearts may blesse them, and that God may blesse them in themselues & their posteritie: you shall haue from them such speeches as these; I know the tore part of my life, but not the end, the world is hard, trade decays, I grow old; I may come to wat where now I giue, a bird in the hand is worth two in the Bush, I am sure of what I haue, I cannot tell what I shall haue; I haue many to provide for, we must liue every man vpon his owne; with a greate Deale of such cold water, which men vse to cast vpon those few sparkles of Charity that's left in them, vtterlie to quench it. Thus God may promise or commande what he will, but most of vs are at a point with him, we will doe but what we list, thinking with our selues it is no bootie to belieue what he promisseth, or obey what he commands. The ground of this perversnes of mens opinions and practises touching our obedience to God is, that infidelity which is rooted in our Natures and growen vp with vs even from the wombe; that poison which the Serpent powred forth into the minds of our first Parents, *viz:* that God did not meane fairly towards them hath ever since deeply infected our natures making vs stil to haue God in a ialousie & suspition, that he wil not do what he saith; when he bids vs obey & makes promise vpon promise that al shalbe wel with thē that feare him, much a doe we haue to take God vpō his word, we forecast a thousand perils: if we do so there is danger, if so yet there we are not safe neither: we begin to argue how this or that can be, whē & which way I shalbe blessed as God saith I shall. And after a great deale of quarrelling & disputing in the end we fal to this conclusion, that it's good to trust God no farther thē

we see him. We may every one read his own thoughts in the practises of men recorded for our observation in the Scriptures. Take a few Examples, *2. Chro. 25.* we read that Amaziah having hired 100000 men of Israel to go with him against the Edomites he was forbidden by the Prophet of God to let the Army of Israel go with him to battle, for if he did he should surely loose the victory; if he obeyed he should conquer. Here now Amaziah is in a straight whether hee should follow the counsell of the man of God or his owne; [*but what shall we doe (saith he) for the hundred Talents which I haue given to the Armie of Israel ver. 9.*] yea this stucke in his stomacke, he could willingly doe as God bids him, but he shall loose an hundred Talents by the bargain, and that is a great matter; wherefore the King could finde in heart to adde obstinacie to his follie, & as at first he had hired them against Gods good liking, so now to retaine them contrary to his expresse commande, and to hazard & loose Gods favour and aide in that iournie rather then the losse of one hundred Talents; and doubtlesse so he had done, had not the Prophet beene earnest with him, and confirmed him by perswading him to trust to Gods power and rest himselfe contented; [*the Lord, saith he, shall giue to thee much more then this*] in the same verse. Again in the 25. of *Levit.* we read that God gaue this law to the Israelits, that fixe yeeres they should sow their land & dresse their vinyards, but euery seaventh yeere the land should rest; they should not sow their corne, nor reape that which growed of it selfe, they should not cut their vines, nor gather their grapes that grew that yeere, as it is from ver. 2. to the 8. of that Cha. Doubt ye not but this seemeth a strange cōmand to this distrustful people, and that they were very hardly brought to obey it, even as many of vs would do in the like case. What? must all Tillage cease? must no regard be had for the fruit of the Earth for every 7 yeare? why this is the direct way to starue vs all? what if harvest & vintage proue bad in the fixe yeeres what shall

shal we haue to liue vpon in the 2 years after? what if the 8th yeare prouenaught then by like we must liue 3 yeares vpon one yeares Provision; thus a famine shalbe brought vpon the Land in all likelyhood; it is not to be doubred but many of them, notwithstanding Gods Commandement, would haue the Plough in the ground, and their pruning hookes at their vines, wee know what they did in the like case. *Exo. 16.* God bad them keepe none of the manna they gathered one day till the next, but yet they did keepe it doubting whether there would be any on the next morning to be had *vers. 19. 20.* God bad them gather none vpon the Sabbath day but that which they gathered on the 6 day should suffice for two daies, yet for all that they will try; and though God say expresse lie ye shall finde none, yet perhaps it's otherwise, they must abroad to see if any thing bee to be had *v. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29.* so extremely hard it is to perswade mē to Obedience when there is any hope of gaine, or feare of losse that may moue them to the contray. Wherefore to prevent such cavils as the Israelites might make against the aforesaid Commandement touching the rest of the 7 yeere God himselfe in the aforesaid *Ch. v. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22.* Answers the matter (*therefore ye shall doe my statutes and keepe my Commandements and doo them and ye shall dwell in the land in safety, &c.*) Take yet one example more, namely the Leviticall worship of God inioined to these Iewes standing in much expence of in time regard of so many Sabbaths, new moones, and other solemne times to bee observed, also requiring no small charge in the performance of it, in regard of so many Sacrifices and oblations to bee made. Could now these covetous and vnbelieuing people spare so much time or cost vpon God Almighty? Heare what God saith of them concerning the one *Amos. 8. 5.* (*when will the new moone be gone that we may sell Corn &c the Sabbath that we may set forth wheat, making the Ephah small and the shekel great, and falsifying the ballances by de-*

ceit) These were their Thoughts if not their wordes touching the time allotted to Gods Service. Iust as men now-a-days. These Sundayes thinke they, is time clearly lost; we might haue gained thus many pence or pounds had it not that Sunday came in and hindred our busines, wee wish it gone that wee were at our Trading againe. Likewise for the other to wit the Charges they were put to in Sacrifice and offerings; heare what God reports of their Practices in that matter. *Mal. 1. 13.* See the couetousnes and Infidelity of that wretched People who think any thing is good enough for God: faire and fat Lambs, and sheepe & Oxen, & Calues without spot, & blemish (as was required in Sacrifices) oh this was too much Charges; was it not pittie to burne such good Cattle, and part with them for nothing? Sell them rather and make mony of them; as for the Altar and the Priest; any leane, starueling, that's nought worth shall serue the turne well enough. Iust as many men doe in setting their Children to seuerall Professions, choose out the fairest and most hopefull, and bestow one vpon the Law, another vpō Physick, another vpon Merchandize, or some other course wherby they may speedily rise to wealth and greatnes in the world. But now if there be ever a deformed Impe in body, minde, & manners plant him in the Ministry; and why? they thinke God deserues the worst Seruants; because they deeme him the worst master; in whose Service there is least credit and hope of Preferment to be found.

For to end this vse, let vs a little obserue the instance here in our Text touching their repairing to the place of his worship three times a yeere: It is evident that the Precept in this kind was very ill observed at all times by the Iewes. Happily at their first plantarion in Canaan when the great workes of God were yet fresh in their memories, their Faith in the Promises kept them some what from the neglect of the Precept: How be it after the setting vp of the Taderacle.

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in Shiloh, when all Israel met together for that purpose
Iosb. 8. 1. we doe not finde expresse mention made of the
 generall keeping of the Pascheouer, till the daies of Hezekiah
 and Iosiah. That these yeerely Assemblies were obserued
 by the Godly Israelies appears by the Example of Elkanah.
1. Sam. 1. 3. and likewise that they were not left utterly
 vnfrequented by the ordinary multitude appears by that
 counsell which Ieroboam tooke. *1. King. 12. 26. 27. 28.*
 fearing lest if the people shoulde yeerely goe vp to Ieru-
 salem they would at one time or other remember their
 duety towards the house of David, and so revolt from him.
 For preventing of which mischief that wicked king (not
 trusting Gods word) who by Abiiah had promised if hee
 would be obedient as was David, God would build him a
 sure house like vnto Davids. *1. King. 11. 38.* [Persuaded the
 people that it was too much labour to resort from all quarters
 so farre as to Ierusalem;] they should take a shorter cut to the
 golden calves at Dan, at Bethel.] Whereby it appears that
 as these solemnities were obserued by many, though not by
 the vniuersall multitude of all the males, so were they never
 obserued before, or after, the diuision of the kingdome.
 Which is plaine by that which is recorded touching the
 Pascheouer kept in Hezekiahs time. *2. Chro. 30.* where the
 Pascheouer was proclaimed throughout all Israell to be kept
 at Ierusalem, for saith the Text, *ver. 5.* [they had not done it a
 long time in such sort as it was writtten.] At which time
 though much people, a very great congregation from all
 parts met together, as it is, *ver. 13.* yet twas not obserued of
 all: the Idolatrous Israelites scorning and mocking at the
 messenger that published Hezekiahs decrees, *ver. 10.* More-
 over touching the Pascheouer kept after this in Iosiah his
 time, the Scripture saith expresse. *1. King. 23. 22.* [surely
 there was not such a Pascheouer holden since the daies of the
 Judges that iudged Israel, nor in all the daies of the kings of Iu-
 dah, nor of the kings of Israel.] See also *1. Chro. 35. 18.*

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This is a thing very remarkable that notwithstanding so expresse a promise in this place, that yet so great negligence should creepe into so principall a part of the worshippe of God as the obseruation of the Passeover. But, my brethren, in this and those other examples we see that which daily experience shewes to be true, that it is a matter passing difficult to obey God when carnall reason suggests that there is apparent likelihood of gaine by not doing, or of losse by doing what he commandes vs.

Use. 2.

The second use shall bee for exhortation to fidelitie and constancie in Gods service, because we shal be no loosers by it, if God bid thee, doe it whatsoeuer come of it, for euill it cannot be; if he forbid thee, dare not to do it what ever hopes thou hast to gaine by it, for it will neuer proue well; cast off fleshlie policie, lay no doubts in the way, put no cales, doe Gods worke and rest secure of his rewardes. Feare not diuels, God commandes ouer them; feare not men, God hath their hearts in his hand, he can perswade, hee can force them; feare not the Creatures, windes and weather, seas and land, heaven and earth wair on him to doe his pleasure, feare nothing whilest thou fearest God and obeyest him: If thou please him, all things shall serue thee for thy Comfort. Heere then beloued, Learne to get Faith, learne to liue by Faith and not sense; looke not vnto appearances, but to the promises: when thou seest no meanes to escape euil, say yet God doth, whose wisdom and faithfulness I dare trust. Read the Scriptures, meditate vpon the promises, and then know that God is no niggard, nor cruell Master that vseth our labour without paying; know that he is never behinde hand with vs. [*Who is there even among you that would shut the doores for nought, or kindle a fire at my Altar for nought. Mal. 1. 10.*] Nay hee giues a pound for a penny-worth, and if thou wilt duely reckon all thy service, thy adventures, thy losses on the one side, and thy gaines on the other: at the foote of thy score thou mayest write it downe

for

for a *summa totalis* (*Godlynes is to me great gaine. 1. Tim. 6. 8.*) Be perswaded then to fit your selues resolutely to the Obedience of Gods Commandements, heare much, pray much, liue holily, deale iustlic, be constant in Religion, feare no hazard, venture all, Credit, Goods, Life for Gods cause; venture all, care not for the worlds Censure, what they thinke of thee and thy estate feare thou God, and thinke of his name, and remember that God promised that one day shall come [*In which men shall discern betweene the Righteous and the Wicked, betweene him that serueth God, and him that serueth him not Mal. 3. 18.*] then they that thinke God now hath forgotten his Seruants shall know that there is no vnfaithfulnes in the Almighty, but that he is as he hath euer promised to be a sure God, a bountifull rewarder of his Obedient Seruantes. The last vse is for admonition on the Contrary side, that if wee loose nothing by the service of God, wee shall certainly get nothing by the Service of sinne and Sathan. Let a man that hath gained much by vsury, bribery, Couzenage and such other vngodly practises, but cast vp middle and both ends, and in conclusion he shall finde, that he may put his gaine in his eyes, & see neuer the worse. Thou hast slowed Gods Service to follow thy owne imployments. Thou hast forsaken the Counsell of God, and followed the plots of thyne owne Contrivance. Thou hast spared from God, from Religion, from the Poore, to the end not to wrong thy selfe. Now reckon at the yeeres end to thy liues end whats the gaine of al this, and thou shalt see that Gods curse hath blasted all these thy fleshlie Policies and practises, and they are vanished into smoake and emptines. Ieroboam will make sure the Crowne vpon his Head, and the Kingdome to his Posterity, but it shall not be by Gods meanes *viz:* the maintenance of his worship and Service, but by a trick of his owne devising. Ieroboam will set vp Idolles, and what gets he by that but the shame and destruction of himselfe and his Posterity? The Coveteous

Vse. 3.

Jewes would not spare the fat Cattle for Sacrifices; what saue they by that? not much; they haue Sheepe, and get Gods curse vpon it and themselues to *Mat. 23. 14.* (*Cursed be the deceiver, &c.*)

In a word get what thou canst get, if thou gaine not Gods fauor, tis not a sauing bargaine, I will not be thy halver. He makes an ill match that winnes the world and looseth God and his owne Soule. Wherefore to end, let vs reforme our Iudgements touching our Service to God and our Service of sinne: know we henceforth that no course is so thriving as that; none so vnprosperous as this. Pray wee for the Publicke, that the Peace of our State may be alwaies as it is, founded vpon the Purity of Religion: endeavour for our private, to provide for the Peace of our Consciences, the happines of our liues, the salvation of our soules by our faithfull and constant Obedience vnto the Gospell. Let vs liue by Faith, and let our eyes be fixed vpon the Crowne of Glorie prepared for vs, and then wee shall see that there is no service to be compared to the service of this great King, who of Servants will one day make vs Kings to reigne with him for evermore.

FINIS

Read by
E P D



Canticles, or Solomons song. 2. 16.

My beloved is mine, and I am his: he feedeth among the Lillies.



N the former part of this Chapter as in the whole song throughout, the Holie Ghost hath described vnto vs vnder most excellent similitudes the great loue that is betweene Christ and his Church, that is, euerie faithfull soule. This loue appeares, 1. in the mutual commendations one of another, 2. in the mutual desire

of one vnto the fellowship of the other. The praises which Christ giues vnto the Church are, that the church (the companie of the faithfull) hath a wonderfull excellencie aboue all other societies in the world. [*Like a Lillie amongst the thornes, so is my loue amongst the daughters.*] All the states and societies of men vpon the earth being compared to the Church they are but like thornes vnto Lillies and Roses without al beauty & delight, vnpleasant & harmful Plants. The praise which the church giues to Christ is answerable to the former: namelie that among al persons of the world he only it is that brings comfort and helpe vnto her. [*Like the apple-tree among the trees of the Forrest, so is my welbeloued among the sonnes of men.*] Men and Angels withal their glory,

Verf. 2.

Verf. 3.

A2.4.12.

Ver. 3.

Ver. 14.

and greatnesse are but barren trees compared to Christ: they bring no grace, no glorie, no peace, no protection to the Church, only Christ is that apletree whose boughs are full ladē, with that spirituall fruit which is that which the Apostle speaks in other tearmes [Neither is there saluatiō in any other: for among men there is no other name giuen whereby wee must be saved.] Thus mutuallie Christ prefers the Church, the Church Christ before all. The great Ioy which is betwene them, one to injoy the other followes at large in the next verses. The Church desireth alway to injoy Christs fauour and protection, his graces to be bestowed vpon her, his power and Spirit to comfort her and support her, in the fellowship of Christ shee professeth to be true Ioy and contentment [I sate downe vnder his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet vnto my tast.] The grace of God and his protection is all her desire and delight, as it is further amplified vnto the 8th verse. The desire and affection of Christ to his Church, every way as ardent as that of the Church to him. He is readie to answere her when she calls vpon him, he makes speed to come vnto her, to shew her his gracious presence, to comfort her, he speaks kindlie vnto her, inviting her by all louing tearmes to come, and partake of all the abundant graces and comforts prepared for her, he tells her how well he is pleased with her obedience, her prayers she makes, her services she performs although in many imperfections and afflictions, [Let me see thy countenance, let me heare thy voyce, for sweet is thy voyce, and thy countenance pleasant.] Lastly he testifieth his care of her safetie, that she be not spoiled by foxes, Heritiques, or other enemies, that would laie her wast. All which is larglie expressed from the 8th verse to the 16th verse. After the declaration of so great affection of the faithfull toward Christ, and of Christ toward them againe follow by way of conclusion, the words of my text giuing vs a short summe of all together, *My beloved is mine and I am his he feedeth, &c.*

In

In these words the Church briefly comprehends the whole Mysterie of this spirituall communion which she hath with Christ, the gloriousness of it, the desire she hath to enjoy it more fully. More distinctly observe these particulars. First the title which the Church gives vnto Christ calling him her Welbeloued, *my Welbeloued*. Secondly the communion or the fellowship, that is betweene Christ, and the Church. What is in Christ serues for the comfort of the Church; what in the Church, all is for the glory and honour of Christ (*he is mine and I am his*) This communion and mutuall intercourse of all good things betweene Christ, and the faithfull is amplified by two particulars. First the excellencie of it, in that it is full of all heavenly comfort, and sweetnesse [*he feedeth amongst the Lillies*] not in barren, and vnpleasant places, but in fruitfull and most pleasant Vallies, or Gardens stor'd with Lillies, and such other delights; there doth Christ feed his Church, noting vnto vs vnder those figures, the singular joyes which faithfull soules are partakers of, vnder the gracious government of Christ their Shepheard and Bishop whose graces and fauours are abundantly communicated vnto them, things farre above the rest and choicest delights that can be imagined. Secondly the vehement desire the Church hath to inioy this communion with Christ, perpetually during this life, and perfectly in the life to come, [*Untill the day breake and the shadowes flee away, I am my beloved, and he like the Roe or the young Hart vpon the topps of the mountaines of Bether.*] Vnder which Allegorie the Church desireth, that which she elsewhere in plain tearmes prayeth for [*Come Lord Iesus, come quickly*] that like a Roe or an Hart, (that is) swiftly he would afford his assistance and presence, to releine her in the time of her Warfare in this world [*ill the night be past, and the shadowes thereof be gone,* (that is) all such imperfections, afflictions, sinne, temptations, and miserie that be vpon her in this life be taken away *when the day shall breake*] The day of Christs

Verf. 12.
Chap. 6.2.

Verf. 17.
4. E. 1. 101
4. E. 1. 101

Rev. 22. 30.

Chap. 4. 6.

glorious coming which the Church shal enjoy in al fulnes of Happiness in the presence of God and Christ for ever. This is the plaine relation and meaning of this Scripture; nor will I trouble this place with any further scruple about the words. I come rather to giue you some Instruction for your practise. The first lesson is from the title of (Welbeloued) in this, *powred at such good will* out to new creation

1. Doct. *That Christ is the only well Beloued of a Faithfull Christian.* This is that which the Church so often repeats in this whole song, stiling Christ her faire one, her Beloued, her welbeloued; him whom her soule loueth; him who she only admires; of him she talkes; she neuer well but when she enioies his presence. If you aske her now, *what is thy beloued more then another beloued?* She can soone answere and tell vs wherefore it is; that all her affection is placed vpon Christ; such excellencies there be in him, so much happinesse is there in her fellowship with him that none but he deserues her entire true loue; and Affection. Good reason then a faithfull soule should loue Christ.

1. Reason First in regard of the excellencies that are in the person of Christ; he is in himselfe most louely; and therefore deserues most loue; al conuincies is deformity if compared to the beauty that is in him, *he is the fairest of ten thousand, nay he is fairer then all the children of men.* Consider him in his graces, consider him in his glory; never any person more louely & amiable. For his graces, he is enriched with all the beauty of holynesse, *he hath receiued the Spirit without measure, he is anointed with the oile of gladness (that is) the holy Ghost;* and with power *aboue his brethren.* When hee was vpon the earth how sweet, and louelic was his carriage; how innocent and vnblameable; what Man or Diuel could charge him with the least offence? Obedient hee was in al things, to his Parents, to Cezar, to God. In euery point he fulfilled all Righteousnesse to the least Title; and for of the Law, Grace was powred into his lips; and from them into his heart

heart, and the hearts of all them with whom he conversed in most divine and heavenly discourses. *Christie* filled his heart and from thence flowed forth on all that had neede of helpe: he did good where it was not expected: he did good where it was refused. What kindnes was done vnto him, but it returned vpo the head of the doer with abundant recompence? What iniuries did he not passe by, and pardon? He endured a world of indignities, persecutions, revilings, reproaches, and in the midst of all is so farre from minding revenge, that he praies and weepes for his enemies, admonisheth them with all meekenesse, heapes kindnesse on them, & seekes by all meanes to overcome their evil by his goodness. Goodnes is his whole nature, his whole life is nothing but a trade of doing well, & suffering evil. Such was the sweetness of his nature and so affectionate charitable was his heart, that no froward, and crooked perversenes of some full, prowde, gaine saying, disobedient men could turne away his desires from doing them good. In all this he was amiable as man, euen a man in abasement and infirmities, yet then was he glorious full of grace and strength. But now looke on him in his person, and in his glorie; and these excellencies are redoubled, nay multiplied a thousand fold. Consider him in his person, and so they are infinite: because in him all the fulnesse of the godhead dwelleth bodily, and the graces of God are his graces, because he is God.

Ioh. 1. 14.

Coloss. 2. 9

As for his glory, it is not for mortall eye to behold it, nor tongue to tell it: he was abased, but God hath highly exalted him among all names and dignities: he hath made him head of the Angels, who adore him; of the Church to rule it by his spirit, Ruler of the world to governe it by the scepter of his power; he is now sate downe at the right hand of Maiestie and Glorie, the father having put into his hands all power in heaven and earth, and committed vnto him all power over Men and Angels. To which greatnes of his power is equal the glorie of his person invested with the robes of Maiestie, bright.

Phil. 2. 9.

Mat. 17.

Act 9.

Revel. 1.

1. Ioh. 3. 2.

Prov. 8. 3.

Esa. 42. 1.

Mat. 3. 17.

2. Reason

brightness, impossibility, and all other excellencies that can be imagined most excellent. When we reade the description of his transfiguration on the Mount, of his appearance to Saint Paul, to St Iohn, we may conceive a little what they saw, but it's hereafter that we shall see him as he is. Now vnto all these graces, these glories of Christ ioine that which is the fountaine of all, from whence ye shall see the parts of his compleat excellencies. That now is the infinite loue of God the Father towards him his only Sonne. *He is his delight, his elect in whom his soule delighteth, his beloved sonne in whom he is well pleased.* so that if we would seeke for a patterne of all excellencies, they were no where to be found, but only in him. No marvaile if the Church, the faithfull (whose eyes are opened to behold those things in Christ) doe loue him, a person so beloved of god, so loue-ly in himselfe, so gracions, so glorious. But this is not all, they loue him also. *methought*

Secondly in regard of what he is to the church, Christ is all in all, what good shee hath it is from him, what shee expects it is by him.

First in this life shee hath grace and protection, grace from his spirit, protection from his power, both from his Loue. The Church is sanctified by his spirit, he baptizeth it with his spirit, washing the faithfull with cleape water from the filthynes both of the flesh and spirit: he hath freed them from that loathsome vncleanenesse of corrupted Nature, wherein the vngodly remain, pollured with all vncleane lusts, he sets them all at libertie from the bondage of sinne, of seruants to sinne making them servants to God in righteousness: he liues in our hearts by faith, and changeth our sinfull natures into the likeness of his most glorious nature by the powerfull workes of his spirit, sending life into vs who were wilde, and withered branches, that being quickned thereby, we might bring forth fruit according to God in all holynesse.

2 Secondly the Church is protected by the power of Christ frō the malice of Sathan whether he act, plot, contriue destruction against whole Churches; or by temptations seeke to vndoe the soules, and saluation of private men. *Christ walketh in the midst of the Candlestickes, Revel. 1. 20.* he only that hath placed them can remoue them; *he hath his flarres his Ministers in his right hand,* where they shall bee safe: he hath all those that God hath giuen him in his keeping and none shall plucke them from him, all are kept safe to that everlasting kingdome. In peace he is the glorie of his Church, in trouble the safetie of it: if shee be in the wilderness, he is the Angel that goes before her to giue her rest, if shee be persecuted he hath a wilderness where to shee may flee, there be clefts and holes in the rocke wherein shee shall be hid, and if the Dragon cast forth whole fflowds of malice to overwhelme her, the earth shall open her mouth, & swallow vp the fflowds, if shee be invaded with Armadoes he can blow with his breath, and they shall sinke into the bottome of the deepe like lead; if vnder-mined by a Powder-plot, he can bring to light the deedes of darknesse, and saue his appointed and his people; by a deliverance as wonderfull as the act intended. In a word his heart is vpon his Church, and faithful people, their sorrowes he thinks vpon, their afflictions, his afflictions, he is pained when they are persecuted, in every distresse he is neere at hand to afforde succour: in health to saue them from sicknesse; in sicknesse to saue them from death: in trouble of estate and paine of body, to preserve them from a disquiet minde, in anguish of soule to vphold them from fainting, by despaire. In life to saue them from a thousand deaths, in death it selfe to deliver them from that death, which is to come. Thus is Christ beneficiall to vs in this life.

But in the life to come he bestowes glory on the Church: the Saints shall be made perfectly righteous, perfectly glorious like vnto himselfe where he is, there they shall be for

eyer to behold his glory, to be partakers of his ioie.

Ch. i. 13.
Ch. j. 16.

You see then that Christ every way deserues all our loue, seeing he is not only most excellent in himselfe, but hath also done most good vnto vs. Whence it is no wonder if euerie faithfull soule conclude as it is in this booke often, that Christ is *to it as a bundle of Myrror, a cluster of Camphire, that he is faire and pleasant and wholly delectable*. Let vs now make some vse to our selues of this point.

He. 1.

The first vse shalbe for a reproofe of mens mis-guided affections, who loue any thing better then Christ; they are baptized into the name of Christ, count it an honour to bee called Christians, and if you will belieue them they expect to be saued by Christ, yet if a man looke into their praetises, theirle appeare to any that can iudge, that they thinke of nothing lesse, care for nothing lesse then Christ. That which the Church confesseth of her owne negligence whereinto

Chap. i. 6. shee was misled, [*They made me keeper of the vines but I kept not mine owne vine,*] shee attended on the fancies and pleasures of others, but not on her owne welfare, this we may apply vnto the profanenesse of most men, who haue Vines enough to keepe and dresse whereabout Sathan and their owne lusts haue set them on worke, but for that true Vine which is Christ Iesus, they take no pleasure at all, in resting themselves vnder his shadow, or tasting his pleasant fruit. Men haue many things to busie their affections about, but while they tend other things they are vterly carelesse of this one thing that is the chiefeft. One man hath set vp preferment and greatnes in the World for the idoll which he worships, and all his time, meanes and thoughts are taken vp in prosecution of some plot wherevpon he hath contrived his farther advancement. Another wallowes in all base pleasure, and so long as hee can content the beastly part of himselfe, his sensuall desires, he thinkes himselfe well-apaied, hee enioies what he loues, and what needes he more. Another loues nothing but mony and cattle, and trees, and earth, it is his

his happynes to say all this is mine, and when he is amidst those things he is amidst all his contentments. In short, every man hath his welbeloued in some kinde or other; but it is not the beloued here spoken of. No (my brethren) these men loue not Christ say they what they will, they make little reckoning of him. Come to the triall of it and you shall see it so. The old saying's true, *Vbi Amor, ibi Oculu*; where we like, there we looke; or as Christ saith, *where our treasure is there will our hearts be also*, Mat. 6. 21. Consider then your selues, in your thoughts what is it you most thinke of? Is it of Christ, of his excellencies, of his benefits? Can you take pleasure in describing to your soules the glorious and gracious qualities of his person, musing attentiuely vpon such admirable excellencies, so farre surpassing all that in this world can be called either gracious or glorious? Are our hearts often warmed with heavenly ioye, when in our private meditations we recount with our selues what great things he hath done and will doe for our soules? To thinke how mightelie he hath wrought in vs by his spirit, to make vs aliue, and keepe vs aliue, when we were once dead in sins; how sweetly he perswades our will and stubborne affections to yeeld obedience; how forcible hee assists vs against most powerfull temptations? Can we reioice to thinke what happynes we haue in his fauour, that he is a faithfull friend to vs in all our necessities, to whom wee may repaire for counsell and comfort? Doe his consolations refresh our spirits, that when sinne wounds vs, his stripes heale vs; When Sathan accuses vs, he is our advocate to plead for vs; when sorrowes and paines are vpon vs, he speakes peace vnto our Soules, that in all wants & troubles we can surely pray vnto him, and poure out our soules into his bosome who only giues them rest? Doe we often meditate on that happynes he will one day bring vs vnto, when hee shall make vs like himselfe, most glorious in our bodies, most righteous in our soules, most blisfull in all, and that for ever? Be our

Mat. 6. 21

thoughts (my brethren) on these things? Run our desires and wishes this way? Oh what strangers are such meditations from most mens hearts! they thinke what they shall eate, what they shall put on, how they shall bring the yeare about, how they shall pay this debt, purchase that field, that house, provide to raise such a soune, to marry such a daughter, to grow rich, to get high places, titles, and offices, how to follow their pleasures and live at hearts ease, how they may effect their wicked designes, oppresse a man, and his inheritance, revenge such wrongs as haue beene done them by their neighbours, and watch them an ill turne to be even with them, yea these be the great and mighty employments of mens thoughts, whereabout they busie themselves, and often breake their sleepe, day and night, the whole weeke, the whole yeare, their mindes run vpon these things, when they be at Church at praier, in hearing, at any good exercise the heart still wanders about such matters, euen at this present. Is it not euen so my brethere, which of vs can excuse our selues, and say my heart is innocent? Consider we againe the practises of men, whether they will stand with the loue they professe in Christ: we will doe much for one that wee loue, especially if it be one that can doe much for vs.

14. Ioh. 15. Now what saith our Saviour. *If you loue me keepe my commandments, Ioh. 14. 15.* If Christ be our beloved, his commandment must be so too. Whosoever hates the law hats the Lawgiuer also. Take a view then of mens practises, & we shall see, they make a very scorne of Christ, & of his commandments. Looke vpon them in their families, & you cannot finde any foot-steps of religion, no constant praier morning and evening, no reading of the word, no instruction of children and seruants, no duties of deuotion whereby you shall know them from Papists, Atheists, or Infidels. See them in the publike worship of God, and there is nothing but negligence and profanenesse, seldome at church if any businesse else be to be done, & when they are there, they are careless in

in praier, in hearing of the word read, or preached, nothing is remembred for which they are a iote the better. Looke vpon them in their private conuersation, & they are full of all vngodlienes, vnrighteousnes, and vnsobernesse, horrible swearers, that cannot speake but they must blaspheme, profane despisers of Gods word, and worship, deriders of preaching and preachers, in a word, enemies to all godlinesse and piety of life, which by reproaches, and vnehrastian revilings, they seeke to blast in whosoever they see it grow, extreame-ly ignorant, knowing nothing distinctly in matters of Religion, not able with any vnderstanding to giue you a reasonable account in any point of their faith. In ciuill dealing men that are vnfaithfull, vntrustie, vnmercifull. In their carriage prowd, disdainfull, luxurious, wanton and vncleane persons. May we belieue such men when they say Christ is their beloued? Surely we cannot though they should sweare it. What? loue Christ, yet not know him, except it be by his name; loue him? And yet despise his seruants, his seruice, his Ministers, make a iest at his word, and put off with a scoffe the counsels and rebukes which out of it are brought to them. Loue Christ? Yet set thy mouth against heauen, and in thy rage and hellish furie discharge thy blasphemies vpon his soule, his body, his blood, his wounds, his name, vpon all that is pretious in him, and not to be named but with devotion. Wilt thou say thou louest Christ, when thou hast no heart to thinke on him, to talke of him, to be in his presence, in the assemblies of Gods people in publike, at sermon, at sacraments, at private praier? Is he thy friend? And yet art though loath to haue any thing to doe with him, in such places, in such exercises? In fine what's thy loue to Christ, whilst I see thy vngodly life, whereby thou dishonourest Christ, and shamest the name of a Christian? If by these practises we shall know thy loue of him, whereby I mervaille shall we know thy hatred of him. But, brethren; be not deceiued, God will not so be mocked, delude thy

selfe thou maist, but Christ thou canst not with such faire glosses: it is not him whom thou louest, it is some thing els, thy pleasures, thy wealth, thy lusts, the world; the Diuell. These be the things whereon thy affections dote, whereto thy desires are fastned, these things thou canst serue, let the commande any thing, thou art at a becke to doe it, it is thy felicitie to be imploied by them. If any will crosse thee in these thy courses, admonish thee, rebuke thee, perswade thee, thou canst not brooke them, thou countest them thine enemies, that thus trouble thee; when thou art entreated by thy loue to God, thy loue to Christ, thy loue to his word, by thy loue to his Ministers, by thy loue to thine own soule, by all things that are louely, & by all loues to deny vngodlines and worldly lusts, and to liue righteously, soberly, and godly. Wouldst thou not be perswaded to reason; didst thou indeed loue any of these, as in word thou professest to doe: but when all admonitions, reprehensions, exhortations, or whatsoeuer good counsell given in the name of Christ shall not yet be entertained for the loue of Christ, but fall vpon the heart like the hammer on the anvill, that strikes but enters not, or like a ball from a wall be smitten backe into the face of him that sent it, with scorne and contempt of him, his message, and his Minister too, say what thou wilt, thy tongue belyes thine heart, *Christ is not he whom thy soule loveth*, when thou wilt doe nothing for his sake, take it for a conclusion, *he hates Christ that hates Christianitie*.

¶ 2.

Use is for Exhortation that seeing wee haue so faire an obiect of loue as Christ is, we would place our loue there and bestow it on him who best deserues it. This is a verie good point to put in practise. Wee haue ignorant, and worldly mindes, wee know not the high Excellencies of Christ Iesus and therefore doe not affect them. The world and worth of it we know and loue, but too well. Againe Sa. than, and our wicked hearts doe blinde our eies, that wee cannot iudge aright of things; it is with our mindes, as it is with

with our eyes, things that are a farre off though of greater & bigger circuite, yet seeme far lesse then those things that are neerer at hand. The earth, and earthly pleasures they are hard by, we taste see and handle them, we finde the sweetness of them by their present possession, their natures agree with ours, they are carnall, and so are wee, and therefore they will sort with our sensuall desires: But now for Heauen and it's Ioy; for Christ, and his graces, and glories, they are matters a far off, out of our kenne, we heare much talke of them in word, but our fleshly mindes cannot raise vp themselves so high, as to conceaue the true worth of them, by that which we heare spoken of them; such spirituall things, fit not with our earthly dispositions, and therefore when we heare of them (take away a few faint desires, that dye of themselves) we haue otherwise indeed no great liking of them, we full euery of vs more or lesse the Prophecy of Esay, foretelling how corruptly men would iudge touching Christ and his conditions, euen wee thinke that *He hath no forme nor comelinesse, and when wee shall see him there's no such beauty that wee should desire him.* Looke how meanely the Iewes esteemed of Christ in his abasement vpon Earth, so doe Christians now iudge of him though in his glory, they see no such great excellency as men speake of in Christ, in his graces, his word, his ministers, his seruice, that they should be so much carried away with the loue of him, or his. How often doe men aske that question in their hearts, *Which the daughters of Ierusalem asked the Church, What is thy beloued more then another beloued, O thou fairest among women, what is thy beloued more then another beloued that thou dost so charge vs?* What need such adoe, such calling and seeking and enquiring of the Watchmen of the city; such charging of vs to tell him of thee, if wee finde him is there any such singular dignity in this thy Beloued aboue others? so men in their hearts and tongues doe enquire strangely touching Christ and religion, they wonder what matters

Esay. 3. 3.

Cant. 7. 9.

Heb. 1. 3.

great matters we finde in Christ, and his seruice, what good they get by so much prayers, preaching, running to Sermons, and hearing; by such strictnesse in their liues, and all this for the loue of Christ, & conscience of his commandements: they see not where the benefit is, and it euen angers them that others should admire what they see not, for any thing they perceiue grace desires not so much law as God; the communion of Christ hath not so much delight in it, as that with they call goodfellowship; filthy pleasures tellish-sweeter, then the ioyes of the spirit, and peace of a good conscience; they can loue the world & the things in the world, bee it an impure strumper, the very image of the diuell as well, nay rather then Iesus Christ. *The brightness of Gods glory, & expesse image as he is called of his person,* This doctrine of louing Christ soundes strangely in the eares of carnall men; Wherefore that wee may make a right vse of this instruction two things are to be obtained before we shall loue Christ.

1 Knowledge of Christ, what are his excellencies in himselfe and benefits toward vs. This knowledge is the mother of affection, What the eye sees not the heart rues not; and tis true on the other side, what the eye sees not the heart ioyes not. Wherefore all meanes must bee vsed to get a distinct knowledge of Christ, in all the forenamed particulars. Perfectly we shall not know him in this life, neither shall we perfectly loue him, but so farre as the word hath described him to vs we may and must know him.

2 Holinesse of heart: for Christ, and all things in him are holy, heavenly, and spirituall, and our affections will neuer take to them, till they be made like to them heavenly and spirituall, 'tis indeed naturall to loue some things, but to loue God that is from grace, this affection is found only in the church, 'tis the soule calls Christ wellbeloued, those that are regenerate, whose hearts are sanctified, those virgins are spoken of in the third verse of the first chapter, who
hane

hauē smelt the odor of the sweet perfumes, & oynments of the Grace of Christ shed abroad in their hearts: these loue Christ, and none els. When thus the eyes of our mindes are enlightened, and our sinfull hearts changed, then shall wee begin vnfaignedly to loue & admire those treasures of knowledge and Wisdome those exceeding riches of grace & glory which are store d in the person of our Lord Iesus Christ: wee shall then looke vpon all that good is the world which before we loued and magnified, now comparing it with Christ wee shall conclude with the Apostle, *The things which were advantage to mee, the same I cannot loose for Christs sake, and iudge them to bee dung that I may winne Christ.* It wilbe with vs as it was with the daughters of Ierusalem before spoken of, who at first Ignorantly and somewhat scornefully asked the spouse what was her beloved, that shee sought so much after him, but when shee had at large described him in all his excellencies, and told them: *This is my beloved, this is my loue O Daughters of Ierusalem,* Now their eyes are opened, and their hearts touched, they are as desirous to goe seeke him as the spouse her selfe and now they begin to enquire of her *O thou fairest among women, whether is thy beloved gone, whether is he turned asiae, that we may goe and seeke him with thee chap. 6. 1.* Now the lord open our eyes by his spirit, that wee may cleerely, spee and ardently loue Christ, to whom with the father, &c.

Phil. 3. 8.

Cant. 5. 16.

E I N I S

The Church is the body of Christ, which is the church of the living God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is the community of believers, who are united by the same faith and the same love. The Church is the temple of God, where He dwells and where He works His will. It is the house of prayer, where we come to seek His face and His mercy. The Church is the pillar and buttress of truth, which stands firm against all the attacks of the world, the flesh, and the devil. It is the light of the world, which shines forth from the city on a hill. The Church is the salt of the earth, which preserves and purifies the world. It is the seed of the kingdom, which grows and multiplies until it fills the whole world. The Church is the bride of Christ, which is prepared to receive Him at any moment. It is the people of God, who are called to live in holiness and to love one another as themselves. The Church is the body of Christ, which is the church of the living God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

